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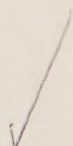
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Century of Puritanism


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A

CENTURY OF PURITANISM,

AND

A CENTURY OF ITS OPPOSITES;

WITH

pt. 2

RESULTS CONTRASTED TO ENFORCE PURITAN PRINCIPLES, AND
TO TRACE WHAT IS PECULIAR IN THE PEOPLE OF LYNN
TO WHAT IS PECULIAR IN ITS HISTORY.

By PARSONS COOKE,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN LYNN.

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sought their good, and laments that he has had so little fruit of his labor, but that his failure was partly owing to his insufficient support. He dwelt pathetically on the hardness of his case, in being set aside after he had passed the meridian of life. And indeed it was peculiarly hard — and the more so in that the unfruitfulness of his ministry here had made it impossible for him to find employment in other places. But for the church it was still more hard. It was well nigh a case of death to them. The personal evils to him, great as they were, were not to be thought of, compared with the evils affecting the immortal interests of hundreds.

In April following the dismissal of Mr. Thacher, a call was given to Mr. Isaac Hurd, of Charlestown. This took place at the time of the last war with Great Britain, when the public mind was deeply excited in politics, in which excitement some of the leading ministers in this vicinity took a prominent part. Little was then thought of the doctrines which preachers held ; and the political excitement made it a matter of still less interest. Mr. Hurd was a Unitarian in theory, though probably little was known of it. The council who installed him

was composed of both Unitarian and Orthodox ministers. For there had been no separation of the two interests then. His ordination sermon was preached by Dr. Osgood, of Medford, an Orthodox minister, but furiously devoted to politics. He took for his text this — "When Paul preached of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled ;" and he set forth the minister's duty to preach so as to make wicked rulers tremble. He spoke eloquently of the evils and distresses which our rulers had brought upon the country by an unjust war, and then complained that some of the ministers were dumb dogs, that will not bark. That feature of the times indicated by such a sermon, on such an occasion, may show why so little was then thought of the question, whether a minister's doctrines were true or false. As it was, Mr. Hurd seems to have been settled by a church that supposed themselves to be in the Puritan faith, without any divisions or questions being raised. It does not appear that Mr. Hurd made any concealment of his views. There was no examination of him by the council, according to the custom of these days. He read a profession of his faith to the council, and

they voted unanimously that it was satisfactory. And yet on that council were Drs. Osgood and Morse, and Mr. Wadsworth, of Danvers. Probably the terms of his profession were not very explicit, as none at that time took the ground of refusing to ordain a minister for want of Orthodoxy.

Though, as it respects the doctrines held by the minister, there had been little improvement by the change, in other respects there was a gain. Mr. Hurd was a gentleman, a scholar, and a man of sense, and serious and conscientious in the work which he had undertaken. And in these respects there was a vast gain. Yet his preaching was not that of Christ and him crucified, and so was not the power of God unto salvation, and so failed of imparting life to the church. A few members were admitted to the church during his ministry. But some of them had their conversion by means coming from abroad, and others of them afterwards seceded to the Unitarian society, when that was established. In all there were sixteen added by profession during his ministry. Of these five are now living members of the church.

The great thing wanted was an element of

life. The minister, not having received the doctrines of the cross, knew not for himself the way of life, nor how to guide others into it. Yet life, and interest felt in religion by the church and congregation, was the one thing which they lacked. The congregation were not so reduced that they could not well sustain the ministry, if they felt its power, and felt it to be worth sustaining. But moral lectures, theoretical essays, and preaching against the doctrines of grace, such as then constituted the main labor of ministers of that class, can awake no spiritual life in a people—as all experience from that time to this has demonstrated. There may be the wealth and willingness, for secular reasons, to sustain a ministry,—there may be in the ministry sustained all gentlemanly and scholarly attainments,—and yet, if the grand elements of the gospel as a way of salvation for sinners are kept out of the pulpit, that ministry, as to the life-sustaining purpose of the ministry, is “powerless as the moonlight cold on the cold snow.”

And the result here was, that in three years the interest and ability of the congregation to sustain a minister failed. And though no one was displeased with the minister, it was neces-

sary for him to seek a dissolution of his pastoral connection. In May, 1816, the pastor called a meeting of the church, and stated that the parish had not fulfilled its obligations to him, in consequence of embarrassments in their pecuniary condition, and there was no prospect that they would be able to do it for the future. What of the salary had been paid had come from borrowed money, and no payment had been made for the last two years ; that is, he had labored with them three years, while the members of the congregation had paid him nothing. Of course his remaining with them would only increase their embarrassments. He was willing to remain longer, if any good could be accomplished by it. But he was clear that none could be, and was impelled to ask a dismissal, which he accordingly did. In accepting his resignation, the parish expressed their deep regrets, and their full satisfaction with the manner in which he had discharged his ministry. The council who sanctioned his dismissal spoke in their result as if the question of life or death to the church had come to an issue. They exhorted them to make an effort to live, as follows : " Shall an ancient church be extinguished, the

place of whose solemnities has been venerable for a century? Shall a church numbered among the first monuments of our forefathers' zeal and piety go to decay, and its lively stones be built on foundations unknown to them, or disapproved by them? We hope better things of you, brethren, and things which accompany salvation, as a church, though we thus speak."

While Mr. Hurd's mind was occupied with the subject of his dismissal, it was coming to a decision of a still more important question. He had read the controversy between Worcester and Channing, and taken new impressions as to the divinity of Christ. And though the public knew nothing of his change of sentiments till after he left Lynn, he informed one of his friends before he left, that he had undergone such a change. Perhaps the fruitlessness of his ministry, as in the case of Dr. Chalmers, had been one means of his seeing his errors. Not long after he left Lynn, he preached to a Unitarian church in Exeter, New Hampshire. They gave him a call, not knowing the change in his views. For that reason he felt himself in honor bound to decline the call, and inform the society of the reason. They then renewed the call, and he

settled over them, and reclaimed them from their errors; and he has since fulfilled a long and highly useful ministry among them.

And here I feel a sensible relief in having finished the mournful recitals of a series of such ministries of errors. At this point our history emerges from shades to receive some of the first rays of the dawn of a better day. Only three years less than a century was this church under a cloud, and, properly speaking, without an evangelical ministry. And what a wonder is it that, for that length of time, it sustained a spark of evangelical life! Yet the power that was symbolized in the bush burning but not consumed — the hand that sustained the chosen tribes in the iron furnace of Egypt — that led them through the Red Sea — that upbore them through a forty years' experience of a life in the wilderness, — that hand sustained a remnant of life here. And all the wonder-working of Providence, by which this was done, is a token of an important mission which this church has yet to fulfil. A few years later than the time of which we now speak, it was seriously questioned by those who wished to sustain the cause of truth here, whether it would not be better to let the

old church expire, and bury with it all its embarrassments, and all the odium that attached to it, and all the contempts that had been heaped upon it. If that had been done; and if then a new organization had been attempted, — for which there would then have been no encouragement, — there would have been, even in case of the success of a new organization, a throwing away of all the advantages for which Providence had, in the labor of a century, kept the breath of life in the church; and in that, we think, there would have been the frustration of a great purpose. If, in the view of God, the life of this church was worth preserving, it must, after it had been preserved, have had in it a value that would more than overbalance all the disadvantage which its many years of sad experience had accumulated upon it. And if it had such a value at the time when its resurrection commenced, it has, under Providence, an important mission to fulfil. God has designs to accomplish through the future experience and agency of this church, which are fit to be the end of such an expensive train of means. He is to glorify himself enough in the future history of this church to exhibit him in triumph over

all the devices of the enemy, through which his name and truth have suffered contempt. He is yet here to show results that will vindicate his glory, and put a surpassing lustre on his truth. Such is the inference which I draw from what God has done to this church, as to what he intends to do with it, that I value a connection with it the more for the wonders of his hand in its preservation. I infer that it has an important mission to perform. And with faith can I give breath to its prayer—"Make us glad according to the days wherein we have seen evil, and the years wherein thou hast afflicted us. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and the work of our hands, establish thou it."

CHAPTER XII.

MR. ROCKWOOD'S MINISTRY.

THE church that had for a century shown great tenacity of life under the seeming death strokes repeated so long, now, under the appointment of Providence, comes into the way to receive a ministry of life. At this time the Unitarian controversy had awaked. The people were discovering the difference between the views which had now extensively obtained and the original Puritan doctrines. Concealments had been thrown off. The controversy between Worcester and Channing had opened the grand debate. Differences that had been very much confined to ministers now came forth upon the people. The Congregational denomination in Massachusetts was soon ranged in two conflicting parties. The society in Lynn, little as it had of Puritan force, or indeed of any force, showed the germs of two interests that were totally irreconcilable, and these about equally divided.

In employing candidates to fill its vacant pulpit, a sort of compromise was observed between Cambridge and Andover, as a source of supply. For near two years an alternation between the two was sustained. In the mean time, those in the society who had been Unitarians without knowing it began to make the discovery, when they had such opportunities to contrast the two systems. The Andover students brought certain strange things to their ears — things which had long ceased to awake the echoes of the "Old Tunnel." To show how this class of people were affected, I will give two or three extracts from a journal kept by one who afterwards became a member of the Unitarian society. "Dec. 28, 1817. Attended the old meeting; heard an uncharitable Hopkinsian Calvinistic sermon. Feb. 22, 1818. Attended public worship at the old meeting — sermon by Mr. Morse, son of Dr. Morse, of Charlestown: it was the true essence of Calvinism — very uncharitable — not profitable to any — cruel as the grave. In the afternoon staid at home." Yet, as there were life and force in Orthodox preaching, though it irritated some, it secured better attendance and fuller congregations than the opposites.

Now the life of the church trembled in the balances. A small weight would have struck the balance forever against her. If, in the then existing circumstances, she had settled a Unitarian minister, she was gone past recovery. The Unitarians believed they had a majority in the parish, and the Orthodox faintly hoped that they should have. This was in their favor, that their preaching drew the fullest houses. Among the candidates which the Orthodox employed was Mr. Otis Rockwood. He did not come here directly from Andover, but had previously been preaching some time in Charlestown for Dr. Morse; and it was not known to the people generally that he was an Andover student; and so he was heard with less prejudice; and many of the Unitarian portion of the people had expressed opinions so decidedly in his favor, before they knew of his connection with Andover, that they could not retract. The call to Mr. Rockwood from *the church* was unanimous. In the parish there was, as it was to have been expected, some division. The call from the church was given March 1, 1818. The meeting of the parish, to act in concurrence, was called for March 30. Of this meeting the private journal

from which we have quoted says, "The parish and church were very much divided, a part being in favor of Mr. Rockwood, while a decided majority was opposed to him, on the Calvinistic doctrine. It was finally voted, by a majority of three, to request him to preach one or two Sabbaths, before they decided upon giving him a call." This vote stands on the record of the parish. The same journal, under date of April 20, says of an adjourned meeting of the parish, "When the question concerning Mr. Rockwood was taken, there were about fifty present: twenty-six voted to give him a call, and eleven voted against it." So the call was made out; and from that 20th of April, 1818, the recovery of that church dates its commencement; though, like the return of life to a person apparently drowned, it was attended with not a few of agonies, convulsions, and dangers.

Mr. Rockwood at this time was under a call to settle as a colleague with Dr. Morse, of Charlestown, where all things in his work and prospects would have been pleasant; but, he yielded to the earnest solicitations of friends, and to his own convictions of duty, to sacrifice his own interests in order to make the experi-

ment of life for this church. Neighboring ministers regarded it as but a doubtful experiment, but desired him to undertake it. He was ordained on the 1st of July. The church at that time consisted of eight males and thirty-two females — forty in all. The congregation varied from one hundred and fifty to two hundred.

The council that ordained Mr. Rockwood was composed mostly of the neighboring ministers, without regard to the distinction of Unitarian and Orthodox; but a majority were Orthodox. Here there was an examination of the candidate by the council, and some of the questions and answers were embodied in the result of the council. At the ordination, the sermon was preached by Professor Stuart, of Andover. A part of the Unitarian ministers on the council refused to vote for the ordination. A part of the Unitarians among the people at first acquiesced in his settlement, in the expectation that, because he was a young man, they should be able to mould him. One of the means by which they attempted to do this was to induce him to exchange with Unitarian ministers. He exchanged once with Mr. Bartlett, of Marblehead, who had not then avowed himself a Unitarian,

though he had shown evident leanings that way. After Mr. Bartlett had avowed himself he invited Mr. Rockwood again to exchange; but he refused. Mr. Bartlett then threatened him, and told him that there were people in Lynn that wished to hear him preach, and that they would make him trouble if he did not exchange. He replied that he must then bear the consequences.

Soon after his ordination, Mr. Rockwood, feeling himself bound to instruct his people in the doctrines of the cross, of which they had heard so little, preached them frequently and plainly. This very soon awoke an opposition. Means were taken to put him down by terms of disparagement, arguing that he must be a small affair or he would not have become the pastor of so small a church. All possible measures were taken to thwart and impede him in his work. In those days it was a matter of course, almost, that ministers should be on the school committee; but in some of the first years, efforts were made, and successfully made, to exclude him from this committee. And here we will anticipate a little, for the sake of speaking of Mr. Rockwood's experience on this committee, in

which he did the town essential service. While the Unitarian minister, Mr. Green, was on the committee, the reading of the Bible was ruled out of the schools, not formally, but effectually, by representing that it was unsuitable to be read in the schools. When Mr. Rockwood was put on the committee, it was, after some opposition by a part of the committee, restored. At that time Dr. Coffin was a frequent, if not a constant, member of this committee; and the schools of this town owe much to his zeal in the cause of education. He was then a member of the Unitarian society; but he cordially coöperated with Mr. Rockwood in all measures for the moral as well as intellectual interests of the schools. When Mr. Rockwood was about to leave the town, he said that the town had better give him a handsome salary to supervise the schools than to allow him to leave. Dr. Coffin's intercourse with Mr. Rockwood in these duties had a most happy influence on his own mind. It was doubtless among the means of preparing his mind for that change of views which issued in his dying, full in the hopes of the gospel, and in full reliance on that almighty Savior whom the theories of his earlier days had set aside.

In some years Mr. Rockwood devoted one quarter of his available time to the schools. That is much more than any pastor can properly spare. Though he accomplished great good, affecting the general interests of the town, it was the diversion of so much of needed labor in the ministry, and so far at his own expense and that of the church. His health and ability to perform the needed pastoral labor were diminished by the means; and so it became one of the leading causes of his asking a dismissal when he did it.

When he commenced his labors here, there were but two families in the church that sustained family prayer. This shows, at a glance, how little he was sustained by the prayers of the church. There were doubtless praying hearts out of these families; but as far as the invisible prayer demonstrated itself by the visible, these two witnesses, prophesying in sackcloth, showed the church to have a remnant of life, and but a remnant. These were the signs put forth to show it to be just on the line between life and death:

Think of a young pastor opening his ministry in such a valley of death, as one sent to call

upon dry bones to hear the word of the Lord. On whom was he to rely for sympathy in his hours of anxiety or depression — for aid in the work of supplication, and in sustaining the social meetings? How discouraged must he have been when going forth to preach to those small assemblies, containing so few hearts in unison with his own, and so many that repelled his doctrines! Let it be remembered that he had not come into this trying position at unawares, nor by necessity, but by a deliberate self-sacrifice. He knew, and was told by neighboring ministers, that it was a doubtful experiment whether this church was to live or die. He made a voluntary offering of his ministerial prospects upon this altar, upon what chance there was for securing its life. For this he had foregone the opportunity of becoming the pastor of one of the most desirable churches in the state, after having fully counted the cost.

Now, among all the self-seeking with which we are familiar, it is refreshing to find such an example, so clearly after the Christian model. We are compelled to grant that even in the ministry many seek their own more than the things which are Jesus Christ's. And yet there are

some instances in which it can be proved that Christ has still a true ministry on earth. And those who by self-sacrifice make demonstration of that fact will not have lived in vain. They furnish the power and work out the material which is available to the whole ministry, when it goes forth upon the conscience of the world, and they thus produce results far from the narrow scene of their own labors.

Up to this time a very effectual obstacle had impeded the growth of the church. The ministry had been of such a kind that persons having serious impressions felt on that account a necessity of withdrawing to the Methodists for a sympathy and instruction which they could not find here. And thus the life blood of the church was so drawn away, that its pulse could hardly be discerned. This obstacle to increase was now removed, but a restoration to life was still a difficult process. What was ordained to life seemed to be unto death. The warm applications to the man nearly frozen to death threatened to kill him by the reaction. The doctrines of the cross, the source of life, were brought to bear. These awoke hostility, and induced another crisis, which threatened destruction to the

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society. Now, to appreciate the difficulties of the minister's work, take your stand just here, and see how little he had to work with—how reduced was his church in numbers and piety—how small his congregation, and how divided. How hostile were the great mass of people around him to him and his doctrines—how disposed to unite in loading his church with contempt—what arguments for that contempt its history for a hundred years had piled up. See him in that position, bearing that burden, and tell how much ought to have been expected of him—how much more than to drag along the mere existence of the church. See how discouraging were his first efforts. The preaching of Christ crucified awoke a determined resistance.

This manifested itself for a few months in the common forms of complaint and irritation. Some members of the congregation went to Chelsea, and perhaps to other places out of town, to worship for a while. Mr. Rockwood was ordained in July. In October following, measures were taken towards a secession of those who were not satisfied. They were all evidently Unitarians, but from reasons of policy they chose

not to hoist Unitarian colors at first. They proclaimed themselves Episcopalians. The first developments of the buds of the Episcopal stock took place in a sermon preached in the old meeting house, on Sunday evening, October 18, 1818, a few months after Mr. Rockwood's settlement, by Rev. Thomas Carlisle, of Salem. Some weeks afterwards the same minister preached on the Sabbath in the Academy. On the 3d of the next January, Bishop Griswold sent a Mr. Chase, a minister in deacon's orders, resident in Salem, to preach. On the 27th of that month, Mr. Carlisle and Mr. Chase came hither, and organized an Episcopal society, consisting of Amos Rhodes, Samuel Brimblecom, J. F. Gardner, R. P. Hovey, William Chadwell, J. C. Jayne, James Lakeman, Ellis Newhall, and Joseph Lye. The usual congregation assembled for Episcopal services at the Academy was about thirty. For a part of the time they had preaching by Episcopal ministers, but for most of the time prayers and sermons were read by some of their own number. Colonel Brimblecom, Dr. Coffin, and Mr. Hovey, a young lawyer, contributed to sustain this service. But at length the society got weary of these proceedings. They found the same doc-

trines from which they had fled in the Liturgy, which they were required to read. At length they commenced omitting the parts of the prayers which contained the objectionable doctrines. This gave offence to the Episcopal clergy. And Mr. Carlisle, who stood to them in the nominal relation of rector, wrote to them a letter, advising them, that if the whole of the church service could not be read, it were best to close the church for the present. The journal from which we quote says, that "Mr. Carlisle's advice was received with joy rather than with grief, and we fondly hope a society will soon be established in this town on the immutable principles of Christian charity and benevolence." This experiment had been continued a little more than three years.

In less than a month after this, arrangements were made to commence Unitarian preaching in the Academy, preparatory to the formation of a Unitarian society. The first steps for a formal organization were taken April 4, 1822, by the choice of Colonel Brimblecom, Henry A. Breed, and William Chadwell, a committee. Three days after, a Unitarian society was formed, by the name of the "Second Congregational Soci-

ety." The society was organized under an act of incorporation, July 18. The house of worship, built at an expense of three thousand five hundred and fifteen dollars, exclusive of the foundation and pulpit, was dedicated April 30, 1823. December 23 of the same year, the formalities of organizing a church were passed. It was on this wise: George Bracket, Henry A. Breed, and Dr. Coffin acknowledged the church covenant, "which was their belief in the Holy Scriptures, in one God, in the divine mission of Christ, his death and resurrection, and a final retribution beyond the grave, and in all that Christ required his followers to believe." Over this society Rev. Samuel D. Green was settled as the first pastor, November 3, 1824.

This secession of course weakened the first parish. But this was not the most formidable difficulty. The parish was burdened with a debt of sixteen hundred dollars. Then, their meeting house, being one hundred and forty-five years old, was undesirable in form, inconvenient, uncomfortable, and much out of repair. It had become a reproach and a byword, being called the Old Tunnel. In every view the prospects of the society were disheartening. There had been

a few additions to the church of persons who gave promise of future activity ; but they were not favored with large pecuniary resources. At a society meeting it was suggested that it was not practicable to raise the necessary funds for the support of the pastor and other expenses, and it was proposed to sell the parsonage and other property, and pay all debts, and disband, and leave the members to unite with other societies according to their individual preferences. Here was another crisis in which life and death trembled in the balance.

A parish meeting to act upon this question took place at the house of Mr. Ephraim Sweetzer, in Federal Street. There were present among others Drs. Gardner and Hazletine, Messrs. Amariah Child, Amos Blanchard, Thomas Rhodes, Jesse Rhodes, John Alley, 3d, and Christopher Bubier. Mr. Alley moved that the property of the society be sold to pay the debts, preparatory to disbanding. The motion seemed to be in accordance with the general conviction of the meeting, as a necessity not to be avoided. When the question was about to be taken on it, Mr. Bubier, one of the younger members present, pleaded for a delay of action upon it, and made an earnest appeal on

the ground that it was to be the extinction of an ancient church, that ought for most sacred reasons to be preserved. After he had concluded, Dr. Hazletine took him aside, and labored to convince him that it was best to give up. He said he could hear the gospel cheaper and nearer home. And in answer to the question whether that which he would hear is the gospel, he said, "I have books at home that will convince you that there is not so much difference, and that Unitarians can be Christians." In justice to Dr. H., it should here be said that Unitarianism at that time had not displayed the features that it now has, and that nobody then saw the difference as it is now seen. His own views had a mixture of Arminianism; and, then, having property, and being liable to bear large burdens in the society, he was under a strong temptation to such a view. All of the meeting, as far as was known, were in favor of the motion, except Mr. Bubier and Mr. Jesse Rhodes. But the meeting was willing to postpone action, and give any an opportunity to show a better way. So they adjourned without taking the question.

In the time of the adjournment the facts were communicated to the pastor, and he took up the

question to see what could be done to save the church from ruin. He said that it did not become him as the pastor of this ancient church, nor did it become them as descendants and successors of the Puritans, to abandon the cause of evangelical truth in this place without further efforts and sacrifices to sustain it. He offered to put his shoulder with theirs under the burdens, and proposed to meet the society at their adjourned meeting and confer with them. At that meeting he proposed to relinquish two hundred dollars of his salary for that year, provided the society would pay him four hundred, and he would make it up to himself by teaching, if necessary. This proposal was accepted, and it imparted new encouragement to the desponding. The four hundred dollars were soon pledged. The pastor then applied to the "Society for promoting Christian Knowledge." They appropriated one hundred and fifty dollars a year for five years, on condition that the parish pay off the debt in that time. This relieved the pastor in part of what he had pledged. The other fifty dollars he relinquished for six years. A subscription was soon commenced to pay off the debt. By what was done here, and by friends

and societies abroad, the amount was raised and the debt paid.

Now, it was made clear that the society intended to live, that it had friends abroad and some recuperative energies at home. The bonds of union among its members became stronger, and many taunting reproaches from without were silenced. Taking advantage of the turning tide, the pastor suggested that now was the time for building a new meeting house. All felt the need of it, and it was not difficult to convince them that it was indispensable to any future prosperity, though it seemed hardly practicable to raise the requisite funds. The ministers of the association gave encouragement that the churches in the neighborhood would coöperate to the extent of a thousand dollars. With this encouragement the work was undertaken. The Old Tunnel frame was removed from its position on the Common to the corner of Commercial Street and the Common, and newly covered and roofed, and furnished with a new front and tower, and new interior and pews, so as to have the appearance of an entirely new building, neat and attractive. The congregation was small when it first removed to the new house; but it was not long

before the pews were nearly all sold or rented. Then it was demonstrated that the society would live. Prophecies of its fall had been falsified, and a gratifying triumph obtained. Occasional additions were made to the church, and the society had increasing prosperity in its general interests. In the year 1831 there was a revival of great interest and power, and, considering the size of the congregation, the number of additions made by it to the church was very large; and to quite the usual extent the fruits of it proved their genuineness by their permanency. The next year after this revival Mr. Rockwood asked and received a dismissal. The number of members in the church then was one hundred and twenty-eight — thirty-two males and ninety-six females; so that there had been a net gain of church members, in the fourteen years of his pastorate, of eighty-eight; and fifty-seven of these were added in the single year of 1831, the year before his resignation.

Now, it is natural to ask, Why, after such results, should a separation of pastor and people be allowed to take place? The very prosperity of the preceding year had contributed something towards it. The great exertions which

the pastor made in that revival had exhausted his energies and health, so that it was indispensable to him to relieve himself from his labors here entirely by a dismissal, or temporarily by absence from the people for a while ; and the circumstances did not admit of the latter course. The society was still in debt, occasioned by building the meeting house ; and he was in debt, occasioned by what he had done to aid the society ; and when he asked a dismissal, he put his request to the society in the form of an alternative — the alternative of refunding to him what he had in former years relinquished of his salary, and restoring his salary to its original sum, or of accepting his resignation. They, in the circumstances, did not feel able to do the former, and so he was dismissed.

Judging of that action on general principle, and with such a limited knowledge of details as a stranger to the transactions must have, the wisdom of the conclusion attained seems questionable. Considering the obstacles in the way, Mr. Rockwood's ministry had been fruitful in a very high degree ; and the year immediately preceding had gathered in more fruits than all the rest. Now, if breathing time could have been given

him. so that he could have returned to his work with recruited energies, the probabilities are, that the influence which he had here acquired with men's consciences, by his self-denying labors and his godly life, would have enabled him to work here with more effect than any other could ; for there is a great loss of power when a good minister is removed from a field where his name and the remembrance of what he has done is doing more, by a silent operation, than the most eloquent preaching of one minister can do. One who has upon the ground acquired the character of a faithful and successful minister, has secured a vantage ground not for slight reasons to be relinquished. But, wisely or unwisely, the dismissal took place June 6, 1832.

To illustrate the discouragements of Mr. Rockwood's position, one person remembers having spent a Sabbath here at that time, and attending at Mr. Rockwood's place of worship, and hearing Dr. Cornelius, one of the best preachers in the country, preach to a mere handful—some forty or fifty people—while Maffit was holding forth to immense crowds at the Methodist church. Such a mountebank and frothy declaimer, to say no worse, was then more to the taste of the

people than the burning eloquence of Cornelius. Two men were never more unlike. And the taste of the multitude, as shown in that instance plainly told on what the public mind had been fed, and how hopeless it was to call it back from the husks to the bread in our Father's house. That single fact shows at once that nothing could be done here till after years of patient toil, gaining little by little.

My first impression as to the results of Mr. Rockwood's labors here was received from his church records. I then knew little of the history of the case; and even then I regarded it as a very successful ministry. But now that I can look somewhat into the depths of his position, and into the hole of the pit from which this church was digged, I am free to say that I regard his ministry as remarkably successful. In spite of all the obstacles, the proportion of additions to the church exceeded the average of what are called prosperous churches. But the true importance of the work which he did here consisted in breaking the force of the tide which was bearing all to destruction, and beginning to set it in an opposite direction. He found here a church having but two praying families, and

left it with many. He found few minds evincing an attachment to the doctrines of the cross, and left a church prepared to unite in a successor who gave fearless utterance to those doctrines. He found the church declining in life and strength, and left it in a state of thrift and rapid increase. And he has been honored of God to break the succession of an erroneous and life-depressing ministry, and head a new series of the preachers of the truth, to whose labors God will attach his blessing; and whoever comes in after generations to write the history of this church, and trace events as time will then have developed them, will trace great results to causes which had their spring under his labors.

The honor which the providence of God put upon his ministry was this, that it was the turning point of life to an apparently expiring church. He sacrificed his own interests and perilled his prospects of a happy settlement in the ministry to make here what was thought to be the doubtful experiment whether this church could live. Such instances of self-sacrifice on the part of ministers are little thought of. With most it is taken as a first principle that ministers

have a selfish motive for every act. And when he declined a call to one of the best churches in the state, that he might unite his fortunes here with an apparently sinking cause, he had no credit for his self-denial : it was even turned to his disadvantage ; and many inferred that he must be a small affair if he would consent to labor here with such a forlorn hope of a church. So little do the world, judging others by themselves, appreciate the moral sublime in self-denial. But it matters not. He has not lost his reward. Events in after years will show — they have already begun to show — more good accomplished, that is, more honor achieved, by that self-sacrificing ministry than is ordinarily secured by a ministry in our largest churches. It was the rescue from death of a church to whose preservation God had attached a great value. God has honored him by setting him at the head of a many-branching stream of life-giving influence here, where children and children's children will see cause to call him blessed.

CHAPTER XIII.

REV. MR. PEABODY'S MINISTRY.—SETTLEMENT OF THE
PRESENT PASTOR.—BUILDING OF THE MEETING HOUSE.
—HISTORY OF THE DEBT AND ITS EXTINCTION.—THE
TEMPERANCE CONFLICT.

THE church was not long vacant. Mr. Rockwood was dismissed in June, and August 13 the church voted a call to Mr. David Peabody, of Topsfield. This call was accepted, and the preliminaries arranged, so that the ordination took place November 15, 1832. In point of ministerial gifts and character, Mr. Peabody was all that could be desired. His pulpit talents were of a high order. Few young men on entering the ministry exceeded him. But what was more, he was earnestly devoted to his work, and, to the extent of his physical ability, laborious and faithful; and under his labors the society had the promise of an increase as rapid as possible, considering the many impediments in its way; and for a short time it had such an increase. But the prospects

were soon overcast. Mr. Peabody's health was feeble, tending to pulmonary consumption. It was feeble when he accepted the call, and in his acceptance he asked to be favored in that respect. Under the labor of the first years of his ministry, always specially trying to the health of a young minister, and subject to the influence of the sea breezes, so injurious to pulmonary complaints, he faltered. After a ministry of about two years and a half, March 29, 1835, he asked for a dismissal, on two grounds—the failure of his health, under the influence of the climate, making it probable that if he remained he should be wholly prostrate; and the great amount of labor necessary to be performed, by reason of the increase of numbers, and the circumstances of the town calling for much labor. It was with reluctance that the church yielded to this request. They voted that they were fully satisfied with the labors, doctrines, gifts, and graces of their pastor, and were willing to make any sacrifices to secure his continuance with them; but after a full and anxious hearing of the case the council judged that there was a necessity for the dismissal; and the event justified their conclusion. Mr. Peabody afterwards

assumed a pastoral charge, which he held for a short time, in Worcester ; and then for a short time held the office of a professor in Dartmouth College, where he died of the consumption that was upon him while in Lynn.

After Mr. Peabody's dismissal, the church was without a pastor nearly a year. The present pastor preached his first sermon here the first Sabbath in March, 1836, and was installed May 4. And here, perhaps, I should end my history, since, if I go further, I shall be compelled to speak in the first person more than is pleasant to do. Yet, since that time, important events in your history have occurred, of which I must have a better knowledge than my successors can have ; so I think it best to continue the narrative. The congregation at the time of my installation were worshipping in the house on the corner of Commercial Street, which was too small to accommodate all that wanted seats in it, and the seats were so few that the pews, unless put so high as to deter worshippers from occupying them, would not sustain the expenses ; and an extra effort by way of a subscription was needed. It was understood that more than twenty families were desirous of

taking pews in the house, when no pews were to be had. The population of the town was increasing at a rate unparalleled ; and it was felt that we ought to take the advantage open to us for increase, as we could not take it while confined to so small a house. Another thing which encouraged the undertaking of building anew, at that time, was the very thing that brought disaster upon it. It was at a time when the public mind every where was delirious with a commercial expansion. Speculation in every thing was rife. On paper fortunes were made in a day. And in such times the building of a house so large was regarded as a small affair, though all materials and expenses of building were at the highest price. Under these circumstances, a resolution was taken to build a house covering a larger area than any other in Essex county. It was taken at a parish meeting, where seventy voters were present, that is, well nigh all the members of the parish. An opposing vote was not given. One, and one only, advised against it ; and if circumstances could have continued as they were, it would have been a successful undertaking ; but when the work of building was about half way to its completion, and when it

was too late to retreat from it, the commercial crisis of 1837 came upon it, like a sudden tempest upon a ship with every sail spread, and it drove us well nigh to a wreck. Many of the members of the parish, on whom reliance was made to carry the burden, failed. The population of the town underwent a diminution of some thousands, by reason of its business being paralyzed. The congregation was diminished by removals. The aggregate property of the whole parish, leaving out that of a very few individuals, was not enough to pay the debt. So when the house was finished, and came to the sale of pews, comparatively few had the means for buying. The expense of the house had been, as is usual in such cases, vastly above the calculation. The house and land cost seventeen thousand dollars; and after the sale of the pews the debt upon the house stood at near twelve thousand dollars. The annual interest on this, being more than seven hundred dollars, was more than the society felt able to pay, if it had no other expenses.

In these circumstances, what was to be done? To pay the debt then was utterly impossible. A majority of the families severely felt the pressure

of the times ; and none had money to invest in meeting house property. These were dark days, when some of our wisest counsellors advised to abandon all in despair, and let it go for a failure. The time when the difficulties of the case came to be fully known and realized was in 1840. We had been two years under the burden, without realizing its full extent. Then, if those who advised to a failure had pushed their advice with earnestness, they would have carried it. To my view, a failure to pay that debt seemed equivalent to an extinction of the church. I knew that I could not labor here, as its pastor, if, added to all the other impediments, it was under the disgrace of a failure. When that question was mooted, I felt compelled to plead against a failure. I did it in a sermon of which the following were the closing words :—

“These are some of the grounds on which I stand, when I say that the thought of scattering to the four winds this heritage of the Lord must not, cannot, will not prevail. Shades of the sainted fathers, Puritans of hallowed memory, forbid it! Let the deliverances wrought for this church in her former trials forbid it! Let your love of truth, and determination to live

and die in its defence, forbid it! The report which has gone abroad that we are on the point of resolving to die, because we have not strength or courage to breathe any longer, I repel as a foul calumny. I am no prophet, or prophet's son; but my word is given for what it is worth, that we shall not die, but live, a rebuke to those enemies of God and truth who have prematurely put their mouth to the 'Trumpet,' to utter triumphs over our overthrow. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble; therefore we will not fear. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. The work which he has begun and conducted with so much care thus far will not be abandoned. This sanctuary, which has cost so many painful anxieties, we trust will stand, a monument of your zeal and self-denial, and echo to the songs of your children and your children's children, till it shall lift its tower amid the splendors of millennial glory."

This quotation is given to show, not the facts, but the feelings of the times. It was felt that the public mind, charged as it here was with hostility to our principles, would take no excuse for the failure of an Orthodox society. Socie-

ties of other principles might fail, and occasion loss to creditors, but not we. That had this society been the occasion — though innocent of occasion — of a loss of so many thousands to its creditors, its failure would have intombed the last hope of preserving this ancient church. Yet the payment of the debt then was impossible. The only ray of hope was by making a strenuous effort to pay the annual interest on the debt, in addition to the current expenses, till Providence might open some way — we knew not what way — to get relief. This effort was made; and, considering the small means then existing, it was nobly sustained. The house was mortgaged to the full extent to which mortgages would be taken; and yet a large debt stood without security, except that a single individual of the parish (Andrews Breed, Esq.) consented virtually to sustain the credit of it through those years when credit was no easy attainment, and when *our* credit especially was questionable. But for him we must have failed. He stood long in the gap, alone, till Providence brought in another friend, (Hon. Isaiah Breed,) equally able and generous, to divide with him and us the burdens. In this aid, furnished at

the time when it was indispensable to life, we are specially bound to notice the hand of God ; and it is fitting that we should leave on record our acknowledgments to men. It is not usual for men of larger means to seek religious connections where large debts are to be lifted. But the burden of this debt was not carried by wealthy men alone, nor chiefly. After the two individuals alluded to had done most generously, it required the straining of every nerve of those who had little or nothing, to carry the load. In the early stage of the difficulty, besides their pew rents, a large number of the congregation contributed the avails of one day's labor in a month to pay the interest of the debt. After that, Sabbath contributions were adopted. By the utmost efforts of this kind the debt was kept from accumulating. Patience had a severe test. We lived in hope that the next year would bring better times. The next year came, and brought no relief. The burden which many felt it impossible to bear one year pressed with little mitigation for five years. In 1842 the debt had been by some special efforts brought down to ten thousand five hundred dollars. At that time, more than three thousand had been paid

in interest money. This was done with the greatest difficulty, when business was depressed, and labor found little remuneration. In the next year and a half, one thousand more of interest was paid, and three thousand to diminish the debt, leaving the debt at seven thousand five hundred. Then we went on paying the interest till 1847, when an effort was made to extinguish the whole at once.

And this, in the circumstances, is one of the most incredible events in the history, and ought to be told; and if I knew any way in which I could tell it, and lay myself wholly out of view, I would choose that way. But it is due to the grace of God that I should not cover it up for fear of personal appearances.

This, then, was the position in which we stood in 1847. We had paid on the house in those ten years, besides what was paid at the sale of the pews, and from the price of the old house — say five thousand dollars, more or less — we had paid in those ten years, principal and interest, about ten thousand dollars. There now remained seven thousand five hundred to pay. After so long a bearing of the burden, many were getting discouraged, and feeling that the debt never

could be paid. The debt — the debt — the debt — met us at every turn. The ability of the congregation had considerably increased. But the burden had pressed so long in one spot, that that spot was sore. In looking at the subject seriously, I began to think it possible that the debt, after all that we had done, might ruin us. I asked myself whether it might not be possible to rouse all to one determined effort to sweep it away. After a severe struggle, and much earnest prayer, I gained one important object. I convinced myself that there was a bare possibility of doing it. But as I knew not that an individual member of the parish thought it could be done, I had two difficult things to do — to convince others that it could be done, and show them a plan by which it might be done. Being very deficient in the talents of a financier, I undertook the latter part of the task with special distrust. But, in my own mind, I formed a plan which looked feasible, by which, through a generous, determined, and united effort, it seemed that it might be done.

Having triumphed in the struggle in my own mind, and brought forth a plan on which I conceived the work possible, my next, and, as it

seemed to me, the more difficult task was, to convince others that it might be done. For this end I prepared a discourse for the Friday evening lecture, and in it set forth my plans and exhortations, —not asking others to *go* and do this thing, but rather to *come* and do it. I promised to give towards the object more, in proportion to my means, than would be required of others. Before I opened my mouth to speak in the lecture of that evening, I was pressed with the consciousness that not an individual would have the least confidence in my plan. Yet my argument was favored somewhat by the felt necessities of the case. Providence had, seemingly, shut us up to do just that thing. Just before, from discouragement as to ever seeing the debt paid, there had been a sad falling off in the usual effort to pay the interest. Many had become weary of a constant giving, without diminishing the debt. And all efforts to renew their interest in it had failed.

And as we could not pay the interest, it was time to pay the principal. To make an effort to pay a part of it was impossible. Nothing would rouse to effort but the hope of being wholly free from debt. Nothing else could draw with suf-

ficient force on the common mind. Yet one risked the danger of being called delirious, if he asserted that the thing could be done — that by one voluntary effort such a people, most of them poor, could raise seven thousand dollars.

Standing on this vantage ground, my argument prevailed. Those who doubted at first, when they saw the general zeal that was kindled, became convinced. With wonderful unanimity and determination all the people, without exception, took hold and did with their might. Take it all in all, it was one of the most remarkable events which I have been permitted to witness. When I look back upon it now, I cannot conceive how I could have convinced myself that the thing was possible. I seem to have been under a strange delusion — delusion I should call it, if the event had not verified it. I cannot doubt that there was a special operation of the Holy Spirit, both upon my own mind and upon that of the people. I looked around on the facts, as they were, and I inquired for the persons able and willing to do so much. By no arithmetic could I make out the amount in that way. And yet, somehow, I wrought myself into a strong persuasion that it

would be done. I seemed to be renewing the experience of him who against hope believed in hope. And similar experience pervaded other minds.

There was a special hand of Providence in moving us to do this work *just then*. We could not go on longer as we were going. I had become discouraged with the position of things, and that very week I had had an invitation to listen to a call to another field, and was prompted to desire to have the matter decided, whether this church was to live or die. In every view a necessity came upon us to do that work just at that time. There had not been a single month in the whole ten years before when it would have been safe to have made the experiment. And if it had been delayed another month, it would have been impossible by reason of a commercial panic which then occurred. So our steps were ordered by One who was wiser than we, and who brought on the crisis when we were able to meet it. Another indispensable condition of our success was a complete union of minds and hearts, and a universal coöperation. If even a few of the least able had refused their aid, we should have failed. There

were none to stand aloof and criticize and discourage the plans of the rest. And it ought to be recorded in grateful acknowledgment of God's providence, that during all these struggles from the first incurring to the paying of the debt, the union of the society was perfect. That time filled out twelve years of my pastorate. And in all that time there had been scarce a ripple of discordant feeling in the society. Our very troubles served to exclude strifes. When, with hearts appalled and distressed, we consulted and prayed together for deliverance, we were well sustained in the consciousness of such a union as made available what strength we had.

Suffice it to say, that a debt of seven thousand five hundred dollars was cancelled by the earnest coöperation and self-sacrifice of a society, nine tenths of whom were persons of very limited means. In several instances individuals that had a single hundred dollars laid aside for a wet day gave it freely for the object. The result was astonishing both to us and to our neighbors. It had been confidently predicted, by persons of other societies, that we must fail. For ten years this had been the common belief.

We supposed others judged us by themselves ; knowing that if such a debt were upon them, as a society, and not affecting individual responsibility, they would not attempt to pay it. Be that as it may, the fact that our killing debt was cancelled, and that without aid from abroad, produced a perfect surprise on the public mind. From that time forth this congregation ceased to be despised. There was then existing towards it a great amount of hostility, and great effort had been made to overwhelm it with contempt. But whatever feelings other societies now entertained towards it, it was impossible to despise it. This event met and turned back a vast tide of reproach. Here was an example of self-sacrifice to sustain the integrity of the society,—an attachment to principle and to religious interests,—an example of union such as is rarely seen. And it manifestly had its effect on the public mind, and has ever since been one element of prosperity.

There are some minds that can contemplate no act of a religious man, or of a religious body, without referring it to some mean and selfish motive. They judge others as Satan judged of Job. Because Satan knew that if he had done

as Job had, it must have been for a selfish end, so he concluded that Job could have had no other. So he said, "Does Job serve God for nought?" So many judge of all Christians. Here was an event to tax the ingenuity of this class of people. In an act of self-sacrifice, hundreds had concurred to discharge a debt which no one individual was legally bound to discharge, and where no one could be charged with violating his moral obligations if he failed to do it. It was done at a great sacrifice of the individuals, — not of a few, but of all. It was done under such circumstances, that a refusal to make the sacrifice by a few out of the whole, would have defeated the plan. So here was at once a test and an illustration of the value of union. To what mean motive the opposers of religion ascribed it we never heard. We ourselves always felt that the hated Calvinism had much to do in it. We saw, or thought we saw, in the nature of our principles, taking hold as they do of God and eternity, that which furnished the sufficient motive for such a sacrifice. Much as the multitude here are wont to dress the Calvinistic system in bear skins, and let loose the dogs of defamation upon it, no congre-

gation opposing, Calvinism on this ground has exhibited an example of the force of moral principle, and of the power of religion upon themselves, equal to this. It were well to say less about those horrible doctrines till they were more carefully traced out in their results, to see if their fruits are so horrible. Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt.

But how happened it that the society should have been able all to think and act alike, at a crisis when the least schism would have caused a failure? It is due to the grace of God to refer this primarily to a purpose, on the part of God, to carry us safely through the crisis. He has all hearts in his hands, and he caused all hearts to be united, when it was with us a question of union or death. We purpose in the next chapter to speak more particularly of the causes of the general union that has prevailed in the society.

One item of noteworthy experience of this society, since my connection with it, has relation to the temperance enterprise. The temperance reform had been in progress in New England some eight years before I came hither ; but up

to that time it had been chiefly under the auspices of evangelical ministers. In concurrence with others, I had, before I came hither, and from the start, lectured and preached extensively in favor of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. I did the same after I came. But soon after, there came up what was called the Washingtonian movement, — begun by Hawkins of Baltimore, a reformed drunkard, who lectured extensively, and touched a chord of sympathy with drunkards, which drew them in crowds to hear him and be healed of their plagues. This movement at first promised great things. My own anticipations of it were great. At first I did my utmost to put it forward. But it soon became to be a feature of the movement, that as you are to set a thief to catch a thief, so you must employ drunkards to reform drunkards. By the notoriety which the reformed drunkards acquired as speakers, the temptation became strong for drunkards to enter the reform on a short enlistment, to improve their gifts at public speaking. And many of this class of speakers sought notoriety by exaggerating the story of their own shame. There was a sort of competition among them to tell

the largest story of their own degradation. Many of them were men in all their habits thoroughly irreligious, and took occasion of their temperance speeches to pour abuse on the ministry and churches with whom the temperance enterprise began. These repulsive features of the thing soon arrayed against it most of the original friends of the temperance cause. I felt compelled at length to stand aloof from it ; but not till I had stood in my own pulpit with one of that class of lecturers, whose breath while he lectured was loaded with the fumes of brandy, and whose lecture was an enumeration of the men of genius who had been inebriates, so as to leave the impression that the use of brandy was one of the indications of superior intellect, and with one (as might be supposed) whose goodness was as the morning cloud and the early dew.

My standing aloof from this movement was seized upon as proof that I was opposed to the temperance cause. And a strong effort was made, by persons who afterwards figured more largely in other forms of opposition to us, to draw off and divide us on that ground. While these matters were in agitation, I was giving a course of lectures to young men on other sub-

jects, at five o'clock, P. M., on the Sabbath. And evidently with a design to thwart me in that, a gathering of the so called Washingtonians was appointed to take place on the Common, in front of our house, at the same time, and a notice was sent in for me to read. I stated to the congregation that I had received such a notice, but that in the circumstances it was not possible not to see in it a personal offence, and a clear intent to thwart my efforts. But I remarked that I should not postpone my own appointment; yet, instead of giving the lecture to young men, I should give a lecture to set forth my view of the so called Washingtonianism; not doubting that I should by that means draw as strongly upon the curiosity of their assembly as they would upon that of mine. When the hour for the lecture arrived, and when but a small part of what would otherwise have collected had arrived, a sudden shower came up, and those who had assembled for the open air speeches were compelled to flee into our house for shelter. So that Providence secured to me what had assembled for both congregations, and I went on quietly with my lecture before just the people that I would desiré to have to hear it. In that lecture,

in describing the evils which had come in through the bad spirit of the lecturers and the habit of valuing lecturers in proportion to the depth of their boasted degradation, I used in my extempore speech the phrase "GRADUATES OF THE GUTTER." That shocked the keener sensibilities of some of the fraternity. It was taken up and put forth in the newspapers and platform speeches as if it contained what was more offensive than blasphemy. And it lived on ribald tongues and pens till the time came when the whole community had come much to my estimate of the preaching of graduates of the gutter, and so that the authorship of the phrase had become rather a compliment than a reproach.

This is one of the episodes to the history of our struggle with the parish debt. We had several of the kind, though essentially from the same source. I know not that they at all increased the burden. They certainly contributed to sustain the energy of the society and its determination to live.

The fact that that debt did not crush us came in a great measure from causes which could not operate in a society holding doctrines opposite to ours."

A religion that excludes that faith and trust in God which was the prime source of this movement, which excludes that conviction of eternal retributions that causes the true value of the gospel and its ordinances to be felt, could not have produced such a result. This case strongly illustrates the force of the doctrines of the cross as connected with the life and strength of a religious body. Indeed, the whole history of the elevations and depressions of this church concurs with all church history to show that what strength a congregation gains by encouraging a lax theology to secure the aid of those who cannot endure sound doctrine, is weakness in the end. That preaching which excludes the offence of the cross sooner or later exhausts the strength of the church. This chapter of the history of this church showing, in such a strong light the connection of the strong doctrines with the recuperative energy of the church, deserves to be written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond in the rock forever, that your children may avoid the rock on which the vessel has so often come near to being wrecked. Through this channel I would gladly address your children's children to latest times, and bid them

beware of checking the full utterance of those gospel truths which are offensive to the carnal mind, and which are yet the life and strength of God in his church, and the power of God unto salvation.

But, well as we knew the causes that conducted us to success in that perilous hour, that success was surprising to ourselves. The general mind of the society for the time when the effort was in progress seemed to be under a special excitement, and when the act was completed we could hardly believe our own ears. When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream ; then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. Then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

CHAPTER XIV.

CAUSES OF UNION. — COMEOUTERS. — SPIRITUAL PROGRESS
— SWAMPSCOT CHURCH. — CENTRAL CHURCH.

A CALVINISTIC church in Lynn has a peculiar position. The position of this church is well described in the language of the prophet. "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled bird ; the birds round about are against her. Come, assemble all ye beasts of the field, come to devour. Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard ; they have trodden my portion under foot ; they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness." The anti-evangelical element which has come in through Arminianism and Methodism, and issued in manifold radicalisms, has, in all its modes of development, borne a special hostility to this church. When the zeal of the radical reformers was at its height, it was concentrated upon us as the main barrier to that kind of reform. In ordinary preaching I made no allusions to it. But now and then a crisis came which gave an opportunity to speak for good.

In such cases I hesitated not to say what more prudent men might think imprudent. Then the hopes of opponents were, that a division would come in through a revulsion of a part against the rash utterance of the pulpit. After such hopes had been many times disappointed, then came up a mystery to be solved — Why the people did not embrace some of the convenient opportunities given them for division. This mystery was greater from the fact that in the agitating times referred to, most of the other societies in the place were divided on questions touching these reforms, and it seemed impossible to live in Lynn without a share in the tempest. During that time this society was one of the most united and conservative. This, to those who felt bound to convert the whole town to a comeouter rabble, was an offence and an enigma. They could refer it to nothing but priestcraft. Nor could they tell how priestcraft could work such a wonder.

The *prime* cause of it lay in the purpose and providence of God, who, in those days of rebuke and blasphemy, would have a witness for himself and a place of rest for his truth, and erect a barrier over which the fury of the mad-

dened elements might not go. Doctrines opposed to the truth of Christ had come in, and produced their proper fruits. The true results of those doctrines were displayed in the insane fury of the ranters. So it was important that in one part of the same field God's truth should be sustained, and its proper fruits be set forth to the view. So it was important that the remnant adhering to Puritan truth, which had been preserved in so many hairbreadth escapes, should then have the union and firmness to withstand the storm.

Here was the prime cause of our union. Not the least of the subordinate causes was, the sacrifices which the individuals of the society had made for the sake of the truth. Ever since the present generation came upon the stage, the life of the church had hung in suspense. Ever and anon a crisis had come, which required great effort and sacrifice to preserve its life. These sacrifices caused its life to be cherished with deep affection, and the thought of its division to be repelled as horrible.

Another cause of the union was found in the reaction of the instruments employed for division. One newspaper, sustained by its owner at

a great loss, made our destruction its main and declared purpose; and the whole labor of the party of which that was the organ assumed that nothing could be done for its ends in Lynn as long as this church existed. The pressure of that hostility bore on every accessible point of this society. Every individual of us felt its force; and against such a storm few would stand with us for other causes than an attachment to principle. By this means, the fearful and the self-seekers were sifted out, and only picked men were left, such as would be made to stand together the more firmly by all the cursing and bitterness that came in upon them.

The *doctrines* held by us were another cause of the union. These, if true, are tremendously true, and fit to command the whole heart and soul. And these, we trust, are to some practical effect believed; and the belief of them impels us to make sacrifices to sustain them, and will not allow us to fall out to their injury on every trivial occasion. We felt that this single church, standing alone for its principles amid so much opposition, bore immense responsibilities touching the future weal of this growing community. It was felt that we had come to a crisis, when

success would open issues of gladness on unborn generations, and defeat would intomb their last hope. So we dared not do otherwise than to stand firmly, shoulder to shoulder.

Another occasion of this harmony has been in keeping clear a distinction between the respective duties of the minister and people. The society never has been embarrassed by attempts at control on the part of the minister, nor has the minister been made the man of a party by the advice of parties respecting his duties. Except in the matter of lifting the debt, when there was a special occasion, I do not remember to have offered any influence to shape the organic action of the society. Generally, its action has been taken without my even knowing any thing of its intended measures till after their execution. Even when the meeting house was built, I gave no advice. The society has ever had men competent to manage its affairs wisely, and I have been happy to acknowledge their competence by avoiding all interference with their department of duty. And the same courtesy I have in a very special manner received from them. I have never in a single instance received advice or remonstrance as to the character of

my preaching. A few weeks after the commencement of my ministry here, a friend now in heaven called on me, and asked me if I would not make it a point always, in my public prayers, to pray for the abolition of slavery. I replied by asking him if he would not analyze his own feelings, and tell me if his desire to have me do it was not that he might be able to quote me as in sympathy with the abolition party. He confessed that it was. I told him that that was a proper subject for prayer, but prayer was not the proper way of promoting party interests in a congregation. I had often introduced this subject in public prayers, and was ever willing to do it, where and when it would not be construed as the evidence of my adhesion to this or that party. He confessed the reasonableness of my ground, and lived and died one of my warmest friends. Excepting this, I do not now remember a single attempt that has been made by any one to influence my action in the pulpit.

Sometimes I have felt it to be my duty to lift up my voice with strength against some prevailing errors or vices. At such times it would have been easy for a few to do us and the cause a great injury. Such are times when timid ones,

if there are any, are apt to throw their influence against the preacher, and help the errors or vices assailed by causing divisions to weaken the arm of the assailant. The first hope of the adversary, in such a case, always is, that the boldness of the stroke will create divisions among ourselves. But such has been the manner of my people in such cases, that they never have made me afraid to do what I have thought wise to attempt. When a bold stroke has been struck, there have been multitudes *out of the society* who have apparently gone into a panic, and have said, "He will ruin his society! Indeed, it is already broken up and scattering." But in such cases the society has not been made imprudent by my imprudence. They have not been wont to commit the imprudence of joining the alarm-cries coming from without, but have preferred quietly to await the issue, and see whether truth will not bear its own weight. This has been the greatest of all discouragements to opponents. After putting forth their worst emissions of bile, they have been wont to conclude with some expression of despair, "It is of no use; they are so under priestly tyranny that they will sustain him, let him say what he will." This sustaining

of the freedom of the pulpit, and backing its issues with one mind, has contributed vastly to our efficiency. However much the truths which I have uttered in the present series needed to be uttered in a way to command a public hearing and a public consideration, the utterance could not have been made with any hope of good but in the midst of a people of tried firmness, who were willing, for the truth's sake, to bear their share of the reproach.

I conceive that in this most trying duty of my whole ministry I have been called to do a work that will make a broader impression for good than any which I have done in this pulpit. After the surf and foam shall have passed away, and serious reflection shall come in, the effect will be seen. Yet I could not have been justified in undertaking such a work, had not former experience given me the assurance that no faltering on the part of my hearers would have neutralized the effort. I am well aware that it was no light burden laid upon my people. They have kindred social and business connections with men of opposite views, which are liable to be marred. Then it is some trial to the nerves to sit and hear the utterance of truths known to be

offensive to many that are present. And it requires some force of conscience to take and bear one's share of testimony in favor of rejected truths. This, indeed, is no more than is the duty of every one.

It were a base and mercenary view of gospel administrations that the truth must not be spoken till we have looked round and assured ourselves that no one's friends will be offended, no one's business be marred, and no one's prospects for office will be hurt. You have never required me to act on such a principle. And yet how often is the utterance of truth checked by such a principle! It is a mistake to think that all the reproach for the truth's sake is to be borne by ministers, who peril their salvation if they shun to declare all the counsel of God. As hearers have a common interest in the truth preached, they have a common responsibility with preachers in holding forth the word of life, and in backing its testimony and bearing its burdens. And to the fact that this society has not been behind in this duty they owe it that they have risen above the flood of contempt that had been poured upon them for the truth's sake.

Still another cause of our union may be found in one of the very things to which many would look for division. Now and then a crisis has come, when it has been a matter of plain duty to meet the errors by which we have been assailed, or some forms of public wickedness, in terms proportioned to the boldness of the aggression. Sometimes, when that has been done, some individuals, who had never entered into the true spirit of our mission, have been shaken off. Their own sense of expediency has been offended. They have felt bound to express their dissent by retiring; and in their retiring, they have taken away just those persons that would have caused divisions. So that in meeting this and that crisis with the boldness which the occasion required, instead of causing dangerous divisions we have secured ourselves against the hatching of future divisions. This operation is now so well understood, from past experience, that no panics exist if an individual at any time finds his sense of expediency violated, and goes where he can have it better satisfied. It is seen that such changes have contributed to make the society homogeneous and strong; for the strength of a

society is sometimes promoted by sifting out, as well as by attracting in.

Such is our apology for that union, that has been so great a scandal to our neighbors.

To appreciate the difficulties experienced in lifting the debt, it must be borne in mind that though we were at peace within, there was a storm without. The abolition excitement had then been in progress several years. And now, the antichristian tendencies of the Garrison and Parker school had just begun to reveal themselves. At the time of my settlement in Lynn, about half of the church were strongly in sympathy with the abolitionists. And because it then had not been clearly revealed whither Garrison was tending, they sympathized with him. And Garrison and his party had their prime seat of operations in Lynn. They claimed a special right to rule here, and took it as an indignity that a Calvinistic church should presume to exist on their ground. And as a part of this church were abolitionists, they expected of course to divide and make short work with it.

Knowing that the abolitionists in the church were, for the most part, sound and reliable as Christians, and ready to revolt against the real

designs of Garrison and company, I applied myself to make evident those designs, by distinguishing between the Christian and antichristian modes of reform. In this, however, as in other instances where party feeling intervened, I rarely mentioned the subject in the pulpit — reserving myself for some providential opportunity to do the work by a single effort. That opportunity came. I was invited to make a discourse at Andover on a public occasion, on just that subject. That discourse was by request published, under the title of “Moral Machinery Simplified.” Its effect on the public mind abroad exceeded all my anticipations. Many, and some for years afterwards, have thanked me for it, as the means of settling their own minds, then in perplexity. *Here* the truth and justice of that discourse were more readily admitted. For the living illustrations in the actual operations of Garrisonism were more abundant, and my having these illustrations before my eyes was probably a cause of the success which I had in the presentation of the subject. But, however much or little that effort did to settle the minds of people here, the actual revelations of an antichristian spirit and design in the reform-

ers soon brought this church to a fixed and united conclusion ; so that, while other churches were rent by abolition strifes, this has never been divided at all on the subject. And because it was not, it awoke the special hostility of the malignants. - It is well known that the abolitionism of that party soon took the form of a war waged against the Sabbath, the ministry, the Bible, and civil government ; and, among all the religious societies of this town, ours was singled out for the special object of hostility. It was constantly declared that nothing could be done here for reform while that Calvinistic church existed. Hence it was to be inferred that our principles were in more direct antagonism with theirs than any other, and could offer a more compact resistance. Be that as it may, the main force of that hostility was concentrated upon us. A weekly newspaper was published for many years to sustain that warfare. We were constantly beset with teasings to give Comeouter notices from the pulpit, or to open our house to lectures of the fraternity. At one time there was a great passion for converting or conquering meeting houses. And while that fever raged I was honored with a special visit.

One Saturday evening I was called from my study, and as I entered the parlor I was met by Christopher Robinson, who introduced me to his friend S. S. Foster. Mr. Foster lost no time in making known his business — which was, to make arrangements to occupy my pulpit, for a speech on abolition, on the morrow. Then, in substance, the following dialogue ensued : —

Foster. I have special claims on the Congregationalists to aid me in my work ; for I belong to a Congregational church.

Myself. What church ?

Foster. That in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Myself. I have seen it stated in the papers that you were excommunicated from that church.

Foster. That is true ; but that does not prevent my belonging to it.

Myself. No ; if we understand that you belong to it as a *minus quantity*.

Foster. Be that as it may, I belong to the general humanity, and I wish to know if I can have your permission to address the people in your meeting house, on the subject of humanity, the next Sabbath.

Myself. To that I can give you a categorical answer — No.

Foster. Can I have it a part of the day?

Myself. No, sir.

Foster. Can I have the vestry?

Myself. No, sir.

Foster. Can I have it in the evening?

Myself. No, sir.

Foster. Who are your parish committee?
Since you claim to control the house on the Sabbath, I will try to get it some other day.

Myself. I will save you that trouble. For this purpose you may consider me the parish committee. You cannot have it on any day.

Foster. Then if I cannot have my rights conceded to me, I must come and take them.

Myself. Pray, sir, what are your rights in the case?

Foster. It is my right to address human beings on the subject of slavery and humanity wherever I can find them, and when your congregation shall assemble to-morrow it will be my right and duty to address them.

Myself. Very well; then your duties and mine will clash. While it will be your duty to address the congregation, it will be mine to see that you are as quietly as possible removed from the house.

Foster. If this is the way you do business, I will go out into the streets and collect around me the mechanics of Lynn, and the working men, and tell them what a tyrant you are.

Myself. I believe that is now very well understood, for it is a threadbare story.

He left, saying that he was somewhat unwell; but if he should be well enough on the morrow, he should be in his place to claim his rights. As I entered the meeting house on Sabbath morning, I communicated to a few individuals the facts in the case, that they might be ready. He came in and took his seat in a pew at the right hand of the pulpit; and when I commenced the reading of the hymn for the second singing, he arose and commenced a speech. I requested him to be silent; he continued. I spoke to him a second time, to require his silence; but he persisted. Then he was taken in hand by several persons sitting near, who attempted to lead him out of the house. True to his non-resistant principles, he sank down in a passive state, and four bearers divided his four limbs between them for handles, and carried him out. Being resisted in his attempt to return, he made his way across the Common to the Baptist meeting

house, and was there carried out and shut up in a closet till the exercise was finished. While this work was in progress, simultaneous assaults were made by other men of the same party on several other meeting houses in the town ; for this was only a part of a concerted plan to take by storm the meeting houses, the fortresses of slavery.

This incident is given as an illustration of the spirit of the times. Lynn was then the home and centre of the sect that styled themselves Comeouters ; and they claimed this ground as especially their own. They represented this society and its minister as the greatest hinderance to their peculiar work ; and no effort was omitted that could tend to remove the hinderance. Arguments and reproaches were used to the exhaustion of their vocabulary. The grossest libels were published by tongue, pen, and press. My name was in constant requisition to point and inspire the wit of their speakers in all sorts of assemblies ; and to their newspaper, in its weekly issues, it had become as indispensable as the types. If I had any vanity in seeing my name in the papers, it was abundantly gratified ; and not only in Lynn, but all abroad, in the

speeches and newspaper articles put forth by these declaimers, it was used with great freedom and malignity. The result was a great addition to my influence abroad. Thousands who, but for these left-handed friends, would never have heard of me, were led to infer, from the manner in which my name was employed, that I had done a service, in opposition to such men, much more important than I had done ; so that, in fact, these revilers manufactured for me a reputation above my merits.

It is not pleasant to be the song of the drunkard, nor the cant of the Comeouter ; yet I have never suffered an hour's loss of sleep from all that sort of abuse, and have taken no pains for defence of personal reputation when the grossest calumnies were abroad. And after so much experience of the care of Providence in this matter, I shall, if possible, be less moved by the present renewal of the dimications of scurrilous newspapers, only construing the fact that these are so persevered in as a sure proof that the impression made is deep, and will be lasting, and that it has been made *by truth* ; for otherwise it would have been repelled by more worthy means.

But to return from this digression. While the pseudo-reformers were alert against us, and watching to take advantage of every word or act, I had occasion to give public notice of two intended sermons on the subject of temperance, setting forth views in opposition to those of our assailants ; but they, assuming that I should say something that I should be unwilling to have published, incurred the expense of bringing in a professional reporter, to secure a verbatim report of my double sermon. The person employed was no doubt a skilful stenographer, and I would have been glad to have had him succeed. Nor was it a fault of his that he did not ; but my infirmity of rapid utterance, which has baffled all my efforts at control, baffled him also.

The report which he made was a miserable jumble. The editor of the reform newspaper gave, in his next paper, a paragraph of it as a specimen, with the announcement that the whole was to be published in a pamphlet. I informed him, through a note in another paper, that his report was worthless, and that if he wished to publish the sermon as it was, he was welcome to the use of my manuscript. His printer came to me in trouble, and inquired what he should do.

He said the sermons were all in type, and he could not print from the manuscript without a loss of the whole labor of composition. I told him it was a matter of indifference to me. If he chose to save expense, and publish the false report, I was willing, now that the falsity of it was known ; or if he chose to publish from the manuscript, it was at his service. He finally concluded to reset the whole, and print it correctly. So I secured an object which I much desired — the publication of the sermon without expense ; and he incurred, in the reporting and false printing, an extra expense of about forty dollars, which was an entire waste.

This incident is of value only as it illustrates the spirit with which a scandalous press was employed, then as now, as one of the many instruments of assault upon us. Every thing that was said in this pulpit, that could in any way be tortured into a shape convenient for use in that paper, was sure to come back with its tortures the next week ; and that organized hostility was carried on till Providence, by a special hand, interfered, and suffered the true fruits of that reform to be produced in the person of one of its leading agents, in a way that shocked the

public conscience, and exploded the conspiracy of the reformers.

Were it proper here to give the details of those events which constituted the finale of that conspiracy, it would remarkably illustrate the providence of God, causing the wicked to be snared in the work of their own hands. It was the carrying out of the very licentious principles for which they had been contending that generated the explosion that blew them to fragments. Could the story be told, it would seem like romance. Could we give the history of one individual, — the leading figure in the group — describe him as he was while occupying a commanding position — a professor of religion — his transit thence to the leadership of the Come-outers — all the characteristic things said and done while he supplied the material of the war, and prompted its measures; and then could we tell to after ages what the living now know of the events which put an end to his reforming career, and what evils have come upon his house and himself, by plain consequence of his principles and conduct, — it would be a source of important instruction. He must be blind who cannot see the hand of God in such an experience

of one who had borne such a part in a noisy and filthy warfare against all that is sacred in Christianity. And while we remember how often that man has uttered, and caused to be uttered and printed, at his expense, the declaration that nothing could be done for humanity in Lynn till this church could be destroyed, it becomes us especially to recognize a divine hand in that disastrous fall, deploring the ruin of a fellow-man, and standing in awe of the judgments of God, fulfilling those words of Christ respecting his kingdom—"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." These things have happened for examples, and should be written for admonition. God brings good out of evil; and the fall and ruin of some he makes to contribute to the standing and salvation of others. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay tree; but he passed away, and lo, he was not! yea, I sought him, but he could not be found."

We have thus far spoken chiefly of our experience in outward condition. For spiritual progress our field has been a peculiarly hard one. What progress we have made has been

against mountains of impediments. By reason of the untoward events in former generations which we have described, the public mind had become broadly and deeply hostile to evangelical truth and godliness. The whole field on which we have stood to cast the good seed has been thick set with tares and cockles. And then an untold amount of prejudice existed against this church, sustained by the memory and traditions of the malign events that have happened to it. Against these impediments we have labored on from year to year, making some progress, and grateful for some progress when we knew that the progress must be slow, and encouraged by evident signs that the prejudice is wearing away. That effort made to pay that hopeless debt did much to command a public respect for this church, and give it an influence with men's consciences which it had not before. It showed a force of moral principle and an attachment to religious truth which the public conscience could not but approve. It has been worth all it cost in the effect it has had on the public mind. Men of other persuasions have been compelled to ask themselves whether, if the case were theirs, they should have paid the

debt, when no individuals were legally bound for it.

But whether the cause be this or that, the effect is manifest. There has been a great and favorable change in the relative position and influence of this society. One person of sound judgment, who has been long conversant with our history, but who is not a member of our society, once remarked to me that the influence and force of Orthodox Congregationalism over the general mind in this place had advanced ten-fold within the last fifteen years. Whether this be an overstatement of the matter or not, it is clear to every observer of both the past and present that the advance has been great. Where is now the congregation in Lynn whose moral force over adjacent minds, hostile as those minds may be to its principles, is greater than that of this?

That the impediments, great as they now are, are decidedly less than they were, is evident to my own consciousness. I can study and preach with vastly more of hope than I could ten or fifteen years ago, for the same labor appears to produce more results. The seed sown does not so much rebound as if falling on a rock.

We have had no very extensive revivals of religion. There have been two seasons that might be called revivals. But most of the conversions and additions to the church have been in individual cases, occurring when there was no general revival. Since my connection with the church, two hundred and forty-six members have been admitted, that is, an average of thirteen a year ; and these are nineteen more members than are now in the church. Of these, one hundred and twenty-two — about half — were admitted by profession. This is a small number considering the time and size of the congregation, but not small considering the tide which has set against us. During this time there have been two offshoots, or colonies, from us ; for that in Swampscot took a sufficient proportion of its members from us to entitle it to that name, though, by reason of its distance from us, it diminished our numbers but very little. And now, reckoning in the worshippers of the three congregations, the number of Congregational worshippers on the ground is four times what it was when we first entered our present meeting house. That probably cannot be said of any other denomination in town.

The most considerable diminution of our numbers was made in the commencement of the Central Church. The individual (Hon. Isaiah Breed) who bore the greatest burden of that enterprise had sustained the heaviest burden in the event of finally extinguishing our debt. He had come to us from another denomination, while we were under our greatest embarrassments, and put his shoulder generously under our burdens. And he could not have manifested a deeper interest, nor acted with a higher generosity, if he had been with us from the first. And while he helped to carry our burdens, it was distinctly understood that one of his motives was, that the way might sooner be opened for the commencement of a new church in his own neighborhood, where all felt that one was so much needed. Accordingly, as soon as we had had breathing time, after our debt was paid, that is, in the fall of 1849, separate worship on the Sabbath was commenced in the locality of the Central Church. On many accounts the fact was regretted by us. We were sorry to lose friends who had wrought with us so effectually. But the expediency of the undertaking was clear to all, and nothing could be said against it.

That society has now had separate worship five years and a half; and during that time the relations between the two societies have been eminently happy—a fact which deserves our grateful acknowledgments.

For the last thirty years, in spite of all the adverse experiences, and the hardness of the field, beset with briers and thorns, the Congregational interest has here made a very encouraging advance. Go back in thought to that meeting of the society held in the time of Mr. Rockwood's ministry, when the motion was made to disband. See what was then the extent of the Congregational interest in all the town, including Swampscot; and then survey the three congregations that have now acquired an independent position here; and you will see that there has been a progress fully rewarding all the faith and patience that have been spent in it, and fully justifying our erecting here our "stone of help," and engraving on it, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

It is instructive to retrace the instances in the history of this church wherein it had a hair's-breadth escape from extinction. There were two instances within the last twenty years: that

when the extent of the debt was first realized, and the question of a failure was seriously debated, and that when life depended on what was seemingly impossible — our paying the whole debt at once. We have also found one such crisis in Mr. Rockwood's ministry. There was another at the time of the dismissal of Mr. Hurd ; and at the dismissal of Mr. Thacher, the council found occasion to exhort the church not to die, in terms which indicated that it was near death. There was another when the question of life turned on Dr. Harris declining a call. But the most discouraging of all was when, under the ministry of Mr. Parsons, one hundred and eight persons at once certificated from the society, and when the church was reduced to five male members. In all those cases, the hand of God preserving the church was clear to be seen. Most pertinent to our case are those words of the Psalmist, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then had they swallowed us up quick."

It is natural, before we close these remarks, to compare the type of religion now in vogue here with what prevailed in the first generations of Lynn. With the present prevailing sect in

Lynn, the pulpits are constantly ringing with denunciations of the horrible Calvinistic doctrines — such as the doctrine of election, and of the saints' perseverance, and the like. These plain truths of the Bible are held up to popular odium, as demoralizing and soul-destroying ; and the current representation here is, that any thing but Arminianism, if it do not entirely exclude Christian character, must allow of only a stinted growth of it. Now, let us compare the type of Christian character which here abounds under Arminian auspices with what Calvinism produced in Whiting and Cobbett, and the like of them, under their ministry. Those so called horrible doctrines, election and perseverance, which are now declared to have such a licentious tendency, were among the prime elements of their spiritual life ; and with such food and drink, such strong meat, they attained vigor and stature. If their doctrines were so much the worse, and yours so much the better, it were well to show it in the superior holiness of life attained.

Now recall the description given by contemporary historians of the first pastors of this church. What is said of Whiting, whom they called, by way of eminence, "the man of God"? — who,

though skilful in doctrine, was said to have done the things that are to be taught better than he taught the things which are to be done; whose meekness of wisdom so outshone his rich attainments in sacred learning that his face, the image of his mind, was ever unclouded with storms of passion; whose daily walk with God was manifest to his people, and a subject of common remark and admiration; who had rare skill and success in speaking a word in season to the wicked. Recall also what is said of his colleague, Cobbett; how, as a prince, he had power with God in prayer; what remarkable answers to prayer he obtained; how he is said to have been always pulling at that golden chain which ties the tongue of man to the ear of God. Yea, read his remarkable treatise on prayer, which on every page reveals a mind richly freighted with the treasures of experience in prayer, and in the applications of Scripture to it, and the equal of which treatise on that subject has not been produced from that day to this. Read the testimony of historians, who say that the country so owed its preservation to his prayers that in his death it lost its chariots and horsemen. Yea, behold those two men in their associate

labors and communings, as exemplifying the love of the Spirit. The historian says, "Great was the love that sweetened the labors and whole conversation and vicinity of these fellow-laborers — the rays with which they illumined the house of God sweetly united. They were almost every day together, and thought it a long day if they were not. And these two angelic men seemed willing to give one another as little jostle as the angels upon Jacob's ladder, while one was ascending and the other descending." Such was the piety of those ministers. And without resorting to the rule, "Like people like priest," we learn enough respecting their people to know that they were congenial spirits with them, and held them in high esteem for their eminent godliness.

Now, such was the type of the piety that ruled in the persons of these lovers and preachers of these horrible doctrines of Calvinism. The tree is known by its fruits. And if you can show no better fruits than these, the conclusion is, that your trees are no better. After your most glowing declamation against the doctrines of grace, we ask the liberty of only one question — and that is, Where are your facts? Where are your

results corresponding to the claimed superiority of your principles? We grant that those men were eminent, and above the average products of our system, now put forth with too little energy. And so is the present piety of Lynn Methodism above the average products of its system. This is the paradise of that system, and until it can show that it has made an advance on the piety existing on the same ground two centuries before, it may as well be silent as to the horrible doctrines held by those men of God. For if, after all the boasts made of having more reasonable and scriptural doctrines, and all that is said of the ruinous tendency of the doctrines of the cross, you have brought in, instead of the full-souled and manly piety and martyr spirit of the Puritans, a weak and sickly product, the improvement is not to be spoken of.

Our civil and social interests have incurred great danger, through the departure of so many from the original and Puritan faith. All history, Mr. Bancroft being judge, shows Calvinism to be the great generator and preserver of free institutions. And in the experience of our country, the increase of radicalism, vice, and crime, which is now a source of alarm, has

kept pace with the people's departures from Calvinism. Our only safety lies in a return to the patriotism, the love of order and freedom, which conducted us through the war for independence. But we cannot rear the fruit without the tree, nor secure the patriotism without recalling the Calvinism that produced it, nor save the coming generations from impending ruin, without a broad and earnest inculcation of the doctrines of the cross. If there be such a difference in the civil and social products of the different faiths, we have — to say nothing of the immortal interests imperilled — great reason to dread the civil consequences of the prevalent latitudinarian and licentious views of religion. And one ground of hope for Lynn is, that for the last quarter of a century, Calvinism in it has several times doubled its amount of life and influence.

APPENDIX.

WE requested Mr. Boice, consulting the records of the society of Friends, to furnish us in detail all the instances in which that society suffered any thing like persecution from ours. And he has done it. But we give in a condensed form the results of the list which he has furnished. We intended to spread out all the details; but the work has filled so much more space than we had expected, that we have crowded out not a little of our own material that we intended to insert. All the ends of the publication of this list will be answered by this condensation of the facts.

It does not appear that any acts of persecution took place, except that of distraint of goods, and fines for refusing military service. Most of the cases of distraint of goods are dated in the latter part of Mr. Shepard's ministry. None of them bear date earlier than 1697, and none later than 1717. So they all come within the space of twenty years. A small portion of them were for military fines; the rest to support the ministry, and pay expenses on the meeting house. The aggregate sum of the value of all goods distrained for those purposes through those twenty years is one hundred and twelve pounds eighteen shillings. The instances specified of persons having goods distrained are fifty-three; but the number must somewhat exceed this, as in some cases *et ceteras* are put down. Such is the substance of the paper referred to.

The explanation of the causes of that action, so far as it con

cerns the support of the ministry, we have given in full. So far as it relates to military fines, we think that, if this were all that the Friends paid for their defence from Indian wars, so rife in those days, they were let off easy; for then the military work was no children's play. To this their reply would be, that the non-resistant principles of the Quakers were their defence. This is a matter of mere assumption and much question, to say the least. But if it were so touching Quakers living in separate communities, where their non-resistant principles could be known to the Indians, and the Romish priests who guided their operations; and who would be sure to hate them none the less for their Quakerism, it could not be so with Quakers living in communities with the Puritans undistinguished. If the settlement in Lynn, as it then stood, had come under a sudden assault and massacre by the Indians, by what process could the tomahawk have distinguished and passed by the Quaker families? And this community of exposure to the tomahawk by a promiscuous residence with the Puritans, chosen by the Quakers against the desire of the others, was a fact for which only themselves were responsible. They had chosen a residence where all were exposed to a common danger, but were not forced to go forth in person for wars of defence; and it was no hardship that, to so small an extent, their money was taken for the common purposes, any more than it now is that they pay taxes to the common purposes of government, one of which purposes is that of national military defence. In other words, the principle on which military fines were collected from Quakers then was the same as that on which Quakers now pay taxes to the government; and this is not regarded as a matter of persecution.

SECOND PART
OF
COOKE'S CENTURIES.

BEING A

DEFENCE AND CONFIRMATION OF THE FIRST ;

SHOWING THAT

METHODISM IS NOT A BRANCH OF THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST.

BY PARSONS COOKE.

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INTRODUCTION.

TILL recently, evangelical Christians have been wont to frown on attempts to expose the mischiefs of Methodism. Imperfectly informed of its operations, most have been ill prepared to sympathize with the few who have come in close contact with it; and who have been made most deeply to feel the injury which it is doing to the cause of Christ. The feeling has been, that Methodists, with some errors, were sincerely and effectually at work in advancing the cause of Christ. But now and then a minister has been compelled to see its inner life, and its true results, and his spirit has been stirred within him, to testify what he has seen; and he has only got frowns for his pains. He has been compelled to print at his own expense, and at a dead loss.

Such I supposed to be the state of things when I put forth what I had written on the subject. I was told that it would be *expedient* for me to leave out what I had to say on Methodism, and so find an extensive sale for my book. The retaining of that portion made my book, of course, unacceptable to

all the publishers, and necessitated me to take all the risks of the publication. But I felt that Providence had set me in a position from which I could not retreat. My conviction of duty overcame my desire for pecuniary safety. I reflected that Providence had caused me to see the fruits of Methodism, as few others had seen them, and had so called upon me to give to the world the results of my observation. And though, judging from the experience of others, I had reason to expect that my readers would be few, I hoped, in those few, to plant seeds of thought which afterwards might produce fruit.

But in fact the Providence of God had gone before me, and prepared the way. The numerous instances of Methodist malfeasance had begun to make a broad impression on the public mind. One of the most noticeable facts in my recent experience has been, that the picture which I had drawn of Methodism in Lynn, has been claimed as a likeness of the thing in other places, more than I can now enumerate. An incident just reported in a letter now before me, shows how my work has met a want of the public mind. A correspondent, who had just come to the reading of my book, states, that in his vicinity, that is, Central New York, in an association of ministers, this subject of Methodist aggressions was taken up for deliberation and inquiry; and the conclusion arrived at was, that it was time for us to be more outspoken on the subject. This conclu-

sion was taken by ministers who had not heard of what I had published. This is not an isolated fact, but an indication of a general state of feeling. My breaking the silence has been hailed as timely by many, whose pent-up feelings took that occasion for utterance — many who had been long wishing that some one would speak out. I was especially and happily disappointed, by the notices of the Congregational and Presbyterian newspapers. That the work should have been so warmly commended with such outspoken notices, was an encouragement vastly above my expectations. This single fact I regarded as decisive proof that there had been a great change in the public feeling in our own denomination, on this subject. This fact was at once an indication and a cause of progress in the public mind towards the truth in this matter. My being able to present in one array, the endorsement of the most influential of our editors, was a vantage ground, such as no writer before me has had in this discussion. And this, perhaps, more than any intrinsic force of the book, roused the wrath and the fears of the Methodists, and put them upon that *foolish* agitation which has done more than any one cause to give circulation and influence to it.

The change which has come over the public mind may be seen, by contrasting the reception that has been given to this work, with what was given to one containing far less material that is offensive to Meth-

odists. About thirteen years ago, there was published in the *Puritan*, an article, written by Mr. Rockwell, then of Chatham, on Cape Cod. He had been in intimate contact with Methodists, and shocked in view of their corruptions, and his spirit was stirred within him to write an earnest article setting them forth. If a bomb shell had been thrown in among the Methodists in Lynn, the agitation could not have been more complete. It was counted worse than blasphemy to use such freedom. The war was turned upon *me*, being an editor of the paper, and the conductors of the war would have it, that I was the author of the article. Every appropriate form of expressing public indignation against me was employed. The indignation meetings took the form of prayer-meetings, to pray for my conversion.

Nor was the article condemned by the Methodists alone. The tokens of sympathy for Methodists in that case, came in abundantly from our own denomination. It was said that such things might perhaps be true, but the truth ought not to be told. The idea was, that Methodists were a privileged class, and their faults were too sacred to be spoken of above a whisper. I mention this as a mark of the change which the public mind has undergone. The book which has been received with more favor than any previous publication of mine, had tenfold more of materials that were necessarily offensive to Methodists, than the article referred to; its little finger

was thicker than the loins of that ; and yet, from our denomination, it has been almost universally welcomed as timely and truthful.

This fact is full of encouragement as to the future. The great obstacle to speaking and hearing the truth has now been removed. Evangelical Christians have become willing to be undeceived, and allow the workings of this corrupting machine to be scanned. The day for the work of proselyting to be carried on by tricks and deception has gone by. The works of darkness are coming forth to the light ; and in this fact alone that system may read its doom ; it needs only to be well known in order to be condemned.

I now suppose that my part of this unpleasant work is done. It will be no purpose of mine to have the last word in the controversy. If the 117 pages of my former work have kept the Methodist press busy for six months, I can expect nothing less than that this little book will give it labor for six years. But in no case shall I reply — unless, as in my past experience, the agitation of the subject shall have opened to me new light, of so much importance as to justify and require the labor. The character of future Methodist replies may be judged from the past ; and such replies cannot make it my duty to appear again.

THE SECOND PART.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.—CHARACTER OF THE REPLIES.—
METHODISM ILLUSTRATED IN THEM.—THE MONSTROUS PRE-
DESTINARIAN: AN EXTRACT.—MR. LUMMUS' EFFUSIONS.—
REPLY TO MR. WISE.—TWO KINDS OF ARMINIANISM.—
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MISQUOTATION OF DR. RUPP.—INFANT DAMNATION.—
UNIVERSALISM AND METHODISM.—CALVINISM AND UNI-
VERSALISM.—PROPORTION OF SPURIOUS CONVERTS.—THE
MEAGRE INCREASE OF METHODISTS IN LYNN.—INJURING
THE REPUTATION OF LYNN.—THE TYRANNY OF THE
WEAK OVER THE STRONG.

WHEN I wrote the 117 pages which have been the occasion of so much writing by others, I wrote, if I know myself, in the fear of God, and for the truth and purity of the religion of Christ. I had no personal resentments to gratify, and I sought my higher ends, carefully avoiding every word that might needlessly affect personal character or feelings. My purpose required me to use great plainness in the naming of *things*, while I was

careful not to injure *persons*. For instance, I called the peculiar scenes at a Methodist altar, a "religious comedy," because no other term was so true to my idea of it. And in several other instances, I used terms alike unpleasant to my Methodist friends, because truth required them. But in no case have I descended to personal abuse. Nor have I any complaints to make, that my opponents have chosen for themselves a different course. To their own Master they stand or fall. I have no difficulty in forgiving any amount of offences of this kind.

CHARACTER OF THE REPLIES.

But as the character of their replies illustrates the spirit of their system, and furnishes a striking argument, to show that the living spirit of Methodism is adverse to the spirit of Christ, it is my duty to call attention to the most prominent characteristic of these productions. Here Methodism has unintentionally and most effectually revealed herself. I need not peril my own meekness by an attempt to bestow upon it the proper epithets. For the people of Lynn, who have read the issues of the Lynn News, the Lynn Daily, (while it lived,) and the Lynn Bay State, will have a sense of that matter, which no words of mine can con-

vey. No candid reader could peruse the whole, and rise from the reading without a conviction, that personal abuse was the main endeavor of the writers. But because the editors of these papers were not Methodists, some may question whether the publications were properly the work of Methodism. If those editors had been made to feel that that dirty work was displeasing to Methodists, it plainly would not have been done. Methodism predominates where their papers circulate. And the demand for just that kind of work, created the supply. It was not for the sake of discussion; for all their issues, for the whole six months, have been on one side of the question. Not to my knowledge, has a single line of a reply been offered to them. So they have not been exasperated by any heats of discussion. The fire has been kept alive purely by the breath of the spirit of Methodism—by the sympathy and coöperation of Methodist readers. Two Methodist ministers in Lynn have taken a leading part among the writers in these papers. And to show that the most offensive editorials of the Lynn Daily were adopted by Methodists as expressive of their feelings, Methodist ministers have sent slips of them abroad, to distant editors, to procure their republication. One instance of this

appears in an article sent to the Northern Christian Advocate, a Methodist paper published at Auburn, N. Y. The writer, in an article from which we have some things to quote, sends to the editor, and procures the republication of one of Mr. Jocelyn's most offensive editorials. So that if Methodism did not dictate Mr. Jocelyn's effusions, it approved and adopted and made itself fully responsible for them. There is no escape from the conclusion, that this whole work of personal abuse, kept up for six months, is the work of Methodism. In this ceaseless jet of ink, every epithet that could blacken character was in use. I was called a maniac, a servant of the devil, a liar, and so on to the end of that series. I was accused of meddling with what did not concern me, by papers acting as censors over the utterances of my pulpit, and over all my private acts so far as known to them. My Sabbath sermons were attended by reporters of these papers, who gave gross caricatures of what was said in them. The penny papers containing these caricatures were hawked about the streets by newsboys, crying — "Here is all about Parsons Cooke!" This was the work of Methodism, so sensitive, lest *I should meddle with concerns not my own.*

The whole of this flow of dirty ink has reflected

the face of Methodism, giving expression from time to time to its varied feelings and resentments. There has been a broad riot and rabble of infuriated pens, and the deeply moved heart of Methodism in Lynn has given them impulse and direction, and is fairly indictable for instigating the riot. If a stranger would wish to know what the spirit of Methodism is, let him read it in those papers; and then let him ask himself if this is the spirit of Christianity — if a religious system, that lives and thrives by a walk with God, and by genuine revivals of religion, is capable of such products — if the same fountain can send forth both sweet waters and bitter?

So much for our home publications. While three papers in Lynn have teemed with this species of literature, more papers abroad than I can enumerate, have, either by quotations or original articles, entered into the work. And the character of these issues was little improved by the ventilation had in their travels. To save the odium of characterizing them, I will give a specimen of them. A Methodist minister in this vicinity encloses one of Mr. Jocelyn's most racy editorials, and sends it to the Northern Christian Advocate, where it is published under date of May 16, with remarks of which the following are a part:

A MONSTROUS PREDESTINARIAN.

While our world is whizzing on with a rapidity quite difficult to manage — a real breack-neck velocity which allows us no chance to serape acquaintance with those travelling “one way,” it is really a relief to be brought up all standing by some strong fellow seizing the brakes, reversing the engine, and bawling to all on board the train to look back to the steady old world, with its logical, theological, metaphysical, puritan times, when men thought by permission, and kissed their wives according to law. We have got just such a man here in New England, — a Congregational minister by profession, a writer by trade, a vilifier of his neighbors in practice, a haughty misanthrope in manners, a D. D. by title, a clerical owl who always sees best in the dark, and gloams and hoots with an apparent intention of infusing melancholy and discomfort into the dreams of honest people who have gone to rest. The name of this wonderful man is Parsons Cooke, D. D., pastor of the first Orthodox Congregational Church in Lynn. I write him out in full, because I want the world should know him. I have known him these twenty years — not personally; I have not that honor, and do n’t wish it; could n’t, would n’t have it on any account. My eternal safety would be in danger. The Doctor would send such an Arminian heretic as I am to the hot world, whose streets are paved with the skulls of reprobate infants, in a jiffy. I

don't want to go there, and I don't want any *personal* acquaintance with Dr. Parsons Cooke. But very few men do, and these few, I reckon, have hard work to get it.

Just as well. Most people turn away from a surly, growling dog; and I am glad that most people, even in Lynn, will treat a burly and surly Doctor of Divinity in the same way. It shows they have sense, kindness, courtesy. Theological bullies are not much in demand now-a-days in the ecclesiastical markets. There is but little for the brawny, brawling fellows to do, and God grant the time may soon come when not an ounce of a job can be found to tempt their ill-natures.

Dr. Parsons Cooke is a predestinarian. Not a puny nor a mincing one. He never saw the kingdom of Lilliput. He is a Brobdignagian — a real Calvinistic monstrosity. Some folks think he out-Calvins Calvin himself. I don't; but he is a match for the Geneva divine in hammering out, interlinking and piling up the horrible decrees; and had he some Methodist Servetus to dispose of ecclesiastically and civilly, he could send him to the tortures of fire with heavenly gusto. It would help him grow in predestinarian grace.

The Doctor has been settled in Lynn not far from twenty years, and I will venture, that in all that time he has never extended the common courtesies of neighborly and religious life to any but his Calvinistic kith and kin. The sight of a Methodist minister, I have fair reason for judging, is a source of torment to him; and the thrift and

strength of Methodism in that fine city of shoemakers and Methodists, will yet, I am afraid, so work upon the excess of his hot blood as to send him hence by some congestive process. The Lord's will be done. In opening his sermonic course, the Doctor said the public mind in Lynn was prepared for the advent of Methodism by the preaching of Arminian doctrines in the Calvinistic Church. Quite likely; for, Doctor, *you know* that the decrees Calvinistic are too horribly hot and Satanic for even Calvinistic hands to hold. He said that Methodism tends to Universalism, and all other isms; Unitarianism, Rowdyism, Spiritualism, Grahamism, Phrenology, Biology, Mesmerism, Mormonism, Fourierism and Infidelism! Then she is a fruitful mother. But supposing Methodism *is* what Dr. Cooke represents it to be, and that the whole brood of isms enumerated above come from Methodism. What then? who is to blame? Not Methodists, but Dr. Cooke's predestinarian God, who "foreordained *whatsoever* comes to pass." I think the Doctor himself could not exclude Methodism from a place among the letters and syllables of that very comprehensive word, "*whatsoever*;" and now for Doctor Parsons Cooke to turn aside from decent work, to kick, cuff, belime and abuse Methodism and Methodists, is outrageous. It is downright rebellion against God. The Doctor knows it. He knows that according to his most cherished philosophy and his most common exegesis of the Bible, Methodism is what it is, and Methodists are what they are, and per-

form what they do, because God from all eternity decreed that Methodism should be, and be what it is, and do what it does ; and that Methodists should be what they are in every respect. Doctor, you deserve to be shut up a whole month in the darkness of Erebus for your insurrection on the decrees of God. You are a sinner of no ordinary dimensions, and courage, too, thus to find fault with the wonderful works, I mean decrees of God ! And yet you do it in preaching against Methodism.

This will serve as a specimen. Many of my Methodist friends have complained, that I have not used milder language. I suspect, that if I had uttered the same truths in the very oil of language, it would have seemed harsh to them, and so it was the more unfortunate, if I indulged in any needless use of thorny words. I did indeed labor the matter of soft words and hard arguments, and if my Methodist friends will set me an example in this line, and if I do not follow it, I shall be the more culpable. But what can be expected of me, surrounded as I am with examples like the one just quoted ? If I am compelled to keep company with such writers as this, and those which have claimed my attention for the last six months, and if the manners of my pen are not ruined by the means, it will be like coming from a fiery furnace unscorched.

MR. LUMMUS' EFFUSIONS.

The New York Christian Advocate has a long series of articles, written in Lynn, falling behind this in its blackguard, as much as it comes behind in talent. This is answered for us by its author himself, as will appear from a scrap of his history. Having been many years a travelling preacher, he became publisher of Zion's Herald. Ousted from that berth he became a litigant with the Methodist Conference, for sums which he alleged they had wrongfully taken for him, some two thousand dollars, if our memory is correct. Having no remedy at law, he published them as defrauders, and brought his complaints before the public in every possible form. He revealed without stint the secrets and corruptions of Methodism, and were we willing to use resources gathered from him for any other purpose than to answer him, we might have them to any desired extent. At length, having done a fruitless battle with the Conference, his eyes were open to the errors of Arminianism. He professed a Calvinistic creed and joined a Calvinistic church and ministerial association. But not succeeding to find employment as a preacher, he saw occasion to unite himself with a body of ministers then seceding from the Methodists.

He asked a letter of dismission from our church, saying that he wished to be present at a proposed Conference of the seceding ministers, then about to be held in Western New York, so that he might use his influence to have them adopt a Congregational Platform, or something approaching to it. After thus changing his church relations he continued to worship with us, combining the professions of the ministry, medicine and law. He had officiated not seldom in adjudicating cases of assault and battery, as Justice of the Peace ; so when a Police Judge was to be appointed for Lynn, he pressed on me a demand, that I should make a personal application to the Governor for him, to have that office. This I refused. In a very short time after this, his eyes were open to the horrors of Calvinism. He published in the Lynn News, an article denouncing one of my sermons; and after that, his seat in our house was vacant, and he became a worshipper with the Calvinist Baptists. How, and when he became convinced, that the Methodist Conference had *not* defrauded him, and were not the corporation of villany that he had represented them, does not appear. Some information on this point would have been a very proper preface to his present series in defence of Methodism; as it is, the columns that he has multiplied may be dis-

missed without a reading, as having been answered before the writing, by their own author. But the Methodist body have stultified themselves, by putting the imprimatur of their Great Organ on his effusions. But if they are satisfied with his work, I have surely no reason to be otherwise. I will not hurt the hair of its head.

This is indeed an *argumentum ad hominem*. But it touches personal character no farther, than that is a part of the *res gesta*. If an opponent contradicts himself, it is reasonable that we should let that contradiction appear. And we have avoided personalities, except so far as is needful to expose that fact. It does not belong to us to choose the defenders of Methodism, nor have we any wish or cause to complain of the choice which they have made. But considering Mr. Lummus' antecedents—his published and unrevoked denunciations of them and their system, their use of him now evinces a gross disregard of the proprieties of life and of Christian principle, and it is in itself a striking illustration of our theme, that is, the corruption of the Methodist system.

REPLY TO MR. WISE.

The most respectable of the issues against me, has been a series in Zion's Herald, by the editor,

Mr. Wise. Indeed this is the only one, that I have seen, that has anything of the form of a regular reply. This too is highly spiced with expressions of personal spite, charges of falsehood and the like. But that is his affair, and not mine. I propose to select the main points of this, and answer them. It would be unprofitable to follow out the unimportant details so much dwelt upon, making a considerable portion of the work. For instance, it would be nugatory to undertake to verify the tradition, *given as a tradition*, about Jesse Lee's refusing to preach in a certain meeting house. Such a tradition has long existed here. But prove it groundless, and what then? So if we undertake to sift the truth from error, about Elijah Downing being a Calvinist, where it seems the most unexceptionable testimony conflicts — or if we would ascertain whether Mr. Butler uttered certain words in a certain prayer, where his not remembering stands against the positive memories of divers of his hearers — or if we undertake to fix the precise degree of the Calvinism held by Deacon Hallowell, when he left the old church, and then held by him when he is represented as retaining one of the five points of Calvinism — we should multiply words on questions of little value to the main point. And the like may be

said of countless other questions, raised by our reviewer.

We shall only attempt to inform the reader how, and how insufficiently he has answered on the more important points, which he has seen fit to notice.

TWO KINDS OF ARMINIANISM.

He makes some show out of an assumption, that the Arminianism that was held by Congregational ministers, is widely different from that now preached by the Methodists. It is granted that that was farther from the truth than their system was when its development first began in the hands of Arminius himself. Just as Methodism, as now put forth here, is farther from the truth than when it first began its development, in the hands of Wesley. Neither Methodism, nor any existing form of Arminianism, agrees precisely with Arminius, the proper father of the system, any more than any existing form of Calvinism agrees precisely with Calvin. But there is no need of hair-splitting here. What were the main points, in which those Congregational ministers differed from Calvinists? They denied the predestination of all events—the unconditional election of believers—the special and efficacious grace of God in regeneration,—the perseverance of the saints.

They taught, that true believers may, and some of them do fall from grace and become unbelievers, and that they may, and some do attain to perfect holiness in this life. No competent person will deny that these were the tenets of what were called Arminian Congregationalists. And we lodge the appeal with any intelligent hearer or reader of Methodism, whether these be not its tenets. In our former work, we showed why the two, so identical in substance, differed so much in immediate results and agreed so well in the final result — which was death.

METHODIST MISSIONS.

We have been taken to task for what we said about the meagreness of Methodist foreign missions in this country, compared with those of the English Methodists. We have since derived some information from an English Methodist now in this country, on that subject, which we wish here to present. He represented the English Methodists as more evangelical and benevolent than the American. This gentleman from England, who has recently had extensive intercourse with American Methodists, says that he has been forcibly struck with the difference — finding the American Methodists sadly deficient as to practical piety. As to missionary action, he finds as

great a difference. The membership of the Wesleyan body in England is less than half of that of the northern section of the M. E. Church, to say nothing of the great body at the South; and yet this half of half of a body, like the American body, raises for missions double what the M. E. Church of the North raises for its missions. And then its missions are almost entirely foreign, and those of American Methodists are mostly home missions. Every church that cannot pay its own minister, even here in New England, and is in part supported out of the mission fund, is called a mission; yet with this difference in the character of the respective missions, the English Methodists give in proportion to numbers four times as much as American Methodists. There is another point of difference: the English Methodists pay their ministers their whole salaries. This is often not done with American Methodists.

THE ARMINIAN BASIS OF ROMANISM

Is denied by Mr. Wise on the ground that the Dominicans followed the doctrines of Augustine. It is well known that from time to time sects have arisen within the Romish church, warring against its main principles, and so have been crushed by the central power. Even more distinguished for

Augustinian doctrines, than the Dominicans, as a body, were the Jansenists. These spread with great rapidity in France in the seventeenth century. But they were put down, and their Augustinian doctrine with them, by the decree of the pope, in that famous bull *Unigenitus*, which now stands out to the world as a declaration from Rome itself, that Rome anathematizes Augustine's doctrines and abhors and crushes what is now the Calvinistic doctrine. The Jansenists and Jesuits were at war, till the Jesuits prevailed; and wherever Jesuits exist, Arminianism lives; and do not the Jesuits control Romanism?

MISQUOTATION OF DR. RUPP.

By a typographical error in our first edition, quotation marks were made to include a passage, which we intended only as a condensation of a historical statement made by Dr. Rupp. We however discovered this and corrected it in the second edition, and in a newspaper, before Mr. Wise's strictures on it were published, and before it had been alluded to by any one. Upon this Mr. Wise builds a great discourse of garbling, misrepresentation and other crimes and misdemeanors. He will have it, that our brief statement varies in very essential particulars from the

sense of the passage, if quoted at length. We will give him the advantage of all the variations which he specifies, by setting the two in opposite columns; Rupp's expressions in the first, and mine in the other.

"Philip Embury a local preacher."	"Philip Embury had been a local preacher."
"Finding there no pious associates with whom they could confer," &c.	"Finding no Methodists, they attended public worship," &c.
"A pious mother in Israel whose zeal was alive."	"A woman whose zeal was alive."

Such are the variations on which he founds the charge of distorting.

INFANT DAMNATION.

We had complained that it was a habit of Methodism to caricature Calvinistic doctrines in many ways, and especially by insisting that we preach that infants are damned. Mr. Wise virtually gives his certificate, that all that we said under that head is true, and most cordially joins himself to the number of the vilifiers. He asserts in most positive terms, that we do preach it. And how does he prove it? He gives a string of quotations, such as they are, on which he relies for proof. One is from Augustine, and one from Fulgentius, both of whom lived more than a thousand years

before Calvin. He gives one from Calvin, one from Edwards, one from Bellamy, one from Zanchius, one each from the Westminster and the Helvetic Confession. Then he brings up the rear with Wigglesworth's doggerel about the Day of Doom, a piece of literature so familiar to the Universalist Trumpet. Of these quotations we may say in general, that if the passages were read in their connection, which it is fair to presume Mr. Wise has never done, it may be doubted whether any one of them would necessarily involve the doctrine. With regard to those best known, as Edwards, Bellamy, and the Westminster Confession, it is well known that they teach no such doctrine. The show of such teaching is made out in the quotation by cutting from its connection a passage in which the doctrine is taught, *not that infants are actually damned, but that they are justly liable to condemnation*. But if such passages convict us of teaching the odious doctrine, then do Methodists teach it. For this is as much a doctrine of Methodism, as of Calvinism. Watson's Institutes, the great text-book of Methodist theology, is explicit on the subject. Page 214, he says: — "There is no more reason to conclude that those children who die in infancy were born with a pure nature, than they who live

to manhood ; and the fact of their being born liable to death, a part of the penalty, is sufficient to show that they were born *under the whole malediction.*" Here is the highest Methodist authority teaching that infants are born under the whole of the curse of God — and of course if not saved by grace, are eternally lost. But for Calvinists teaching this and no more, a thousand Methodist tongues are vocal in the charge of teaching infant damnation. It is difficult to believe that Mr. Wise has any idea that a living Calvinist minister preaches the doctrine. We have been told by a seceding Methodist minister, that it is well known to him that Methodist ministers generally understand, as well as we do, that this doctrine is not preached by us ; but that they purposely keep alive the imputation because of the advantage which they have from it. If this remark has a true application to Mr. Wise, we are sorry that it has. Whether it has or not the reader must judge from the facts.

That no writer, in all the sweep of eighteen centuries ; that no writer, however eccentric or extreme, however remotely connected with the living Calvinists, ever uttered a conviction that some infants are damned, is more than we are concerned to assert. But the matter complained of was, the

imputation that the *living Calvinists* of New England preach such a doctrine. And for this monstrous imputation, the editor of the Methodist organ in Boston makes himself responsible. He ends his totally irrelevant string of quotations by saying: "Such, sir, is the nature of the proof which Methodists are prepared to offer, that Calvinists [now] teach the damnation of infants." We had not complained that Augustine and Fulgentius, who lived 1400 years ago, had been slandered. But we demanded proof or retraction, that *the living Calvinists* preached such a doctrine. We aver most solemnly, after connection with this ministry for thirty years, that we never heard the doctrine preached, we never read it in any book except as we have read it in the garbled quotations referred to, we never to our knowledge saw a man that held it, nor one that had ever heard it preached, and we see not why every living Calvinistic minister might not say the same. Yet Mr. Wise with a bold front declares to his thousands of readers, that we *do preach it*. When the proof that we do is demanded, he offers some very questionable evidence that some body else has preached it, centuries ago, but not a particle of proof that *we* do it.

It is with an ill grace that he cautions us

against marring the common peace of the churches by controversy, when he meets our complaints of abuse by such a repetition of the abuse, and such an express determination THAT THE ABUSE SHALL LIVE. Is any more affecting illustration needed of the fact that the Methodist system is corrupt and corrupting, than that it clings with such tenacity to a fabrication so injurious to the best part of the Christian church, and so vitiating to the minds of those who entertain and use it? Satan takes his name from being a false Accuser of the Brethren; and a sect that thrives by false accusations, and lives and revels in a spirit of denunciation, must have too much affinity with him to be a church of Christ.

And why is Mr. Wise so unwilling to relinquish this imputation? Because it is the nutriment, the life-blood of his system. It has been, and now is, one of his most efficient weapons against Calvinists. His most prevalent argument in proselyting has been, that Calvinists preach such horrid doctrines as this. But let the reader mark the issue to which we have come with Methodism. It charges us with preaching an odious doctrine. We deny the charge, and demand the proof. It declines to give proof, but boldly reaffirms the charge. Therefore know all men, that Methodism,

in its public organs, is deliberately and perseveringly a transgressor, and by the most wholesale dispensation of its words, a transgressor against the command, Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. It is not here and there an individual — it is not a few ignorant men and women who do this. It is the body of its clergy, it is its periodical literature and public organs, it is the Methodist system that feeds and nourishes and sends abroad this falsehood; and all connected with the system and upholding it, are at least so far responsible for the crime.

UNIVERSALISM PROMOTED BY METHODISM.

I had stated that the warp and woof of one Universalist society in Lynn — and I supposed the same of the other — had been made up of persons who had been members of the Methodist church, and subjects of a spurious conversion. And how does the writer in the Christian Advocate answer this? Not by denying the fact. His answer, for one who is an eye-witness, a native of Lynn, aged 70, personally acquainted with a great part of the individuals, is very significant. It is as follows:

Rev. Mr. Jewell, pastor of the Second Univer

salist Society, is as correct in morals, as kind and social a neighbor, as Rev. Parsons Cooke, D. D., and much more exemplary as a quiet, peaceable citizen, who is willing to mind his own business, visit his people, and let others enjoy *their* opinions, while he disseminates his own. Some of Mr. Jewell's parishioners are examples of good morals, benevolence, and kindness, as neighbors.

The fact in question was not whether Mr. Jewell and his people were better than Parsons Cooke. That might be admitted, and yet it might be true, that they had once been members of the Methodist church. Such an answer, from such a source, is an effectual endorsement of my statement. It was to have been expected, that a champion of Methodism would express his preference for Universalists before Calvinists. The mother naturally loves its child, as appears in many and intimate sympathies between Lynn Methodists and Universalists. If what I had stated, as to the warp and woof of this society, had not been true, would not such a one, living in the midst of them, have denied it, instead of making such a poor shift to evade the point?

But Mr. Wise, not being so well acquainted in Lynn, attempts a denial. Let the reader look at this case a moment. Speaking of facts which

were under my eyes, and under those of my immediate hearers, who could easily detect the error if there were one, as it related to their neighbors right about them, I said the warp and woof of that society had been made up of persons who had had a Methodist conversion. The fact was well known to me, and to many of my hearers, and to all others conversant with the history of the individuals. In the full assurance that no honest man would deny it, and staking my character on its truth, I made the declaration. I did not mention the unnamed person who aided me in the investigation as a witness, but I named the fact of his aid to show that I had considered the matter in detail. I took the stand myself as a witness, and made the declaration on my own knowledge, and on a basis of public notoriety. But Mr. Wise comes to Lynn and finds a man whom he does not name, and who appears not to be willing to be publicly responsible for his assertions, who says that he finds only six persons in both societies, that have been Methodist professors. All we have to say is, that it is a very remarkable fact that Mr. Wise can find such a man in Lynn. But it is not competent to quote an unknown man in such a case, against the declaration of one that is

known. He had other means of demonstrating the truth, if he would.

CALVINISM AN ALLEGED CAUSE OF UNIVERSALISM.

Mr. Wise finds among the earlier Universalist ministers some who had previously been Calvinists, and hence concludes that Calvinism tends to Universalism. It is well known that the Universalism of Winchester and others, which was a species of Antinomianism, made as a caricature of Calvinism, and resting on an atonement, has been long ago exploded and abandoned. The present Universalists came to their results through Arminian and Pelagian methods of reasoning. The first Universalists held many doctrines in common with Calvinists. But experience convinced them that their position was untenable. And now I know not of a living Universalist that holds any of the distinctive points of Calvinism. And I know of none who do not come to their result through Arminian processes of reasoning. They universally hate Calvinism, nearly as much as the Methodists do; and they have the same modes of warfare against it — making just the same use of caricatures and imputations of infant damnation. But the question is one of fact: Whence do the recruits to supply the ranks of Universalists

actually come ? If they are made up mainly of persons subject to spurious conversions in Methodist revivals, as abundantly appears, the conclusion is established.

Mr. Wise speaks of the predominance of Methodism over Calvinism at the South, and of the fact that there are few Universalists there, as a proof that Methodism does not produce Universalism. It is well known that that irreligious element out of which Universalists are here made, is even more abundant at the South than here, and the Methodist church at the South is much more loose and corrupt than it is here — so much more so, as to have required a separation. And then the irreligious element outside of all churches does not organize into Universalist societies there as here ; because the religious element there has not force enough to provoke it to action as here, and because from the sparseness of the population, such organizations are not so easy. And it is much to be questioned, whether the Arminian or semi-Pelagian element there is relatively stronger than it is here. The census shows, that the Presbyterian and Baptist denominations in the fifteen Southern States, to say nothing of the Episcopal and other minor sects, have 714,032 sittings more than the Methodists. The two

stand related to the Methodists in proportion of 25 to 17.

PROPORTION OF SPURIOUS CONVERTS.

We had stated, on the testimony of Mr. Rockwood, who testified from personal knowledge, that in one revival in Saugus Village, where thirty joined the church, only two of the thirty were members of the church at the end of the year. Mr. Wise meets this by an anonymous letter, in which it is stated that eighteen of the subjects of that revival are now members of the church. If there is anything in the doctrine of chances, this is not true. It staggers all belief—it is against all analogies, that after thirty-six years, — after more than one generation has passed from the stage, eighteen of that thirty can be alive. It has a very strong appearance, like some other parts of the anonymous testimony used, of having been fabricated to order. It requires something more than the shadow of a name—the testimony of a nameless man, to carry conviction of such an improbability. But it may be so. It is even within the range of possibilities, that those eighteen may be now members of the church. And that possibility may fully consist with Mr. Rockwood's testimony, which was, that at the end of the year, they had

ceased to be members of the church. According to Methodist usage they may have ceased and begun again many times in the course of thirty-six years. But in any event, a nameless writer is not to be believed, against the careful and responsible testimony of Mr. Rockwood.

INCREASE OF METHODISM IN LYNN.

Mr. Wise accuses me of looseness of statements, about the number of Methodist church members in Lynn. I spoke without the figures before me, and without pretending definite knowledge. He spoke with the figures in his possession, and having definite knowledge, and then gave us a statement that was more erroneous than loose. Instead of giving us the numbers, he says that the number is *near* a thousand — when in fact it is only 835. He must pardon us for estimating the number too high in a *loose* statement when he himself overestimates it by an erroneous statement. We have in Lynn become so accustomed to boasts of the rapid increase of Methodism, that we were even taken by surprise to see him put the number short of a thousand. Judge then of our greater surprise, when we came in possession of the facts. In Stevens' History of Methodism we learn that the aggregate number

of Methodist members in Lynn, in 1846, nine years ago, was 770. The minutes of the last Conference show the membership of the several churches as follows: Common street church 305 — Union street 130 — South street 157 — Maple street 95 — Boston street 148. Total 835. From which number subtract the first, and you have 65 as the Methodist gain in nine years; that is a gain of seven in a year on a capital of 770. This is less than one per cent. a year. In the statement I here make I have followed the minutes, as they read, according to their plain import, leaving out probationers where such are named, and inserting for either term of the comparison, only such as are put down as members; yet aware that Mr. Wise says, that in one term, allowance should be made for probationers, which are not named. The equivocation which runs through all Methodist administrations, makes it needful (in nautical phrase) to take it on either tack. We will first follow the statistics according to the plain and obvious sense, and then according to Mr. Wise's interpretation of them. So astonished were we at this result, after all the boasts of increase, that we could hardly believe our own eyes. We again retraced the figures over and over, thinking there must be some mis-

take. But the Methodist documents show it, and there can be no escape.

We then naturally turned to our own statistics for a comparison — little dreaming, that with all our disadvantages, being a little band under so much reproach, we could pretend to have made as much increase as the sect that carried with it the main influence and heart of the people. The figures showed, that in 1846, the Congregational church members in Lynn, all told, were 185, and that now, not including those of Swampscott, they are 307, which shows a gain of 122 on a capital of only 185 — that is, a gain of 14 a year, which is nearly eight per cent. So that while Methodism in Lynn had added to its capital short of one per cent. a year, orthodox Congregationalism has added to its capital more than seven per cent.

At this result I was profoundly astonished, and for the discovery I am indebted to Mr. Wise charging me with looseness of statements. After all that has been said of growth, and all the crowing in the grosser forms — too gross for politicians after an election — the truth comes out thus! The Congregationalists, repressed by the odium brought to bear upon them, were grateful for small favors, and rejoiced with trembling over such a growth as they had, not daring to compare

t with the swelling pretences of the ruling sect. Yet it comes out that their increase per cent. is eight times that of the Methodists. May God resist the proud and give grace to the humble.

But Mr. Wise says, that probationers were included in the minutes in 1843 and 1846, though no probationers are there named. Let us now take it for granted that they are included, and see how the account stands. On the minutes for the last year, there are 104 probationers set down to the churches in Lynn. Add these to church-members, and you have 939, just thirty-six more than there were twelve years ago; that is a gain of about two members and one probationer a year, while the population has doubled. But in order to cover the meagreness of this account, he goes out of town for recruits, and demands that we shall take in the New Church in Swampscott, a church not in Lynn, and a church very few of whose members have ever had church connections in Lynn. The whole number of members in Swampscott is but 25, and of these many are known to have come from Cape Cod, and other places abroad. Only a small fraction of the 25 had been members of any church in Lynn, and the probationers that swell the account in Swampscott, did not, of course, come

from the Lynn churches. Furthermore, in making the comparison of Congregationalism with Methodism, I left out the Swampscott Congregational church, because it was not in Lynn. That church has 49 members not probationers; while the Methodist church in Swampscott has but 25. And this 49 members is clear gain to Congregationalism, having all been gathered within the nine years, and so would have added so much to the percentage of our increase. Furthermore, there is a manifest inequality in bringing Methodist probationers, only one in ten of whom can make permanent members, into comparison with Congregational members; or, at least, it should, in the comparison, take ten probationers to count one member.

As to the idea that we chose for comparison a point of time when Methodism was rejoicing in the abundant harvest which it reaped for its encouragement given to the Millerite delusion—it is too suggestive to be treated in this connection, and will be treated more leisurely in the sequel. As to his suggestion, that in my book I represented the *relative power* of Methodism in Lynn as having been great for the last sixty years, and that now my showing that its *increase* has been small or nothing for the last twelve years,

involves a contradiction—it may do where materials for argument are scarce. But that may be left to the common sense of the reader. Methodism, as Mr. Wise confesses, *has had* a broad and “formative influence” on the character of Lynn; and it is no less true that Methodism in Lynn is now dying out.

What makes this case still more remarkable is, that during this nine years, revivals have not abounded in the Congregational churches. We have had but one season that we dared to call a revival, and that was limited. Most of our additions have been those of isolated individuals; while the Methodists have proclaimed more revivals than I can remember, and more conversions than will be believed. During all the time they have had three large churches, and a part of the time five churches. And we were constantly hearing of a revival in this church and that, wherein now fifty and now a hundred were converted. The last year was not distinguished for revivals among them; and yet the minutes report more than a hundred for the last six months. That proportion, carried through nine years, would make eighteen hundred. It is no stretch of probability to estimate the number of conversions said to have taken place here, during this time, under Methodist

auspices, at 1200. And yet out of all this number we have only an increase of 65, or 7 a year. And that is less than the number of Methodist church members which have come in from other towns. Who is there in Lynn that can doubt, that the Methodist body has received at least twice seven members a year by certificate from abroad? Now if these churches have received 1200 by conversion in nine years, and have also received more than their increase by certificate from abroad, have not they leaked out by spuriousness at least nine tenths?

What makes this Methodist increase the more meagre is, that during these nine years the population of Lynn has increased at least one third; and Methodism had need to increase one third, or to add to itself 385, in order to hold its own relatively with the population. So that compared with the people, the town, and its hold on the swelling population, it has fallen off 320; that is, more than the membership of its two new churches.

In view of these facts, let us ask if this offensive boasting of increase, which for years we have heard *ad nauseam*, savors of a Christian spirit. If the body were pervaded with a healthy spiritual life, should we hear so much of this, even if the facts would sustain it? Should we not say, that some

other spirit than the spirit of Christ animates men, whose common phrase about their successes sounds like the successful political party, celebrating a triumph with illuminations and torch-light processions? Take a specimen from the article already quoted in the N. C. Advocate:

“And still the Methodists grow, and worse, they mean to keep on growing. Their rational and scriptural views of God, and the plan of human redemption, together with their free and social manner of serving God, make them more than acceptable with the sensible Lynnites. They are decidedly popular, and to meet the public demands they must soon build two or three more churches. Dr. Cooke has watched the growth of Methodism there for many years. The Lord knows better than I do the amount of agony it has cost him. Such sufferings cannot always be endured; and this spring the Doctor sought relief from his excess of gall, and accompanying pains, in a series of sermons on Methodism. I learn they are to be published. I hope they will be. They ought to be, and will be, if it's so decreed. Give us a big edition, Doctor, we'll take them, and read them, and then twist them into a rope with which to strangle your predestination hobby.”

The style and spirit of this is sufficiently offensive to the Christian mind, even if the facts were

so. But how disgusting and wicked is all this when the facts come to be known. This is the style in which Methodists boast over those whose advance is eight to one of theirs. Is this Christianity?

There is a desperateness about this boasting which deserves notice. The boasters *know* the truth. They know that Methodism, throughout New England at least, is on the wane, and rapidly declining. But what shall they do? *their success* has been their great cause of success, and the great argument that Methodism is the great power of God. If the real facts could be known, their glory would depart. They can no more afford to lose this argument, than they can that of infant damnation. So in spite of facts which so depress their hearts, they keep an open mouth in celebrating the astonishing triumphs of Methodism. This indeed is reduced to the form of sober argument. And it has been used very effectively. We have said, that the leakages from Methodist revivals have been perhaps nine tenths of the converts. The reply has been — “What if they have? we can afford to lose nine tenths, and then we make more rapid progress than any other sect.” But this discovery of facts annihilates this argument. Having shown how

the facts are in Lynn, we purpose, in the sequel, to extend this inquiry further, and show that as a matter of fact, Methodism is perishing in its own corruption.

Now we are better prepared to come to Mr. Wise's attempt to show an absurdity in my conjecture, that nine tenths of Methodist conversions prove spurious. I was very curious to see how he was to answer that. His answer is, that there are near a thousand Methodist members in Lynn, and if my rule be correct, there must be nine thousand apostates. Hold! There are not near a thousand members — there are 835. That takes off from the formidable number 1650. Then it is well known that of those who are proclaimed as converts and enter the class, and so put into a position to apostatize, only a part hold on long enough to finish their six months probation and get into the church. Then all know that it is common with Methodists to convert and count as converts their backsliders several times; hence probably most of the backsliders now out of the church here, have been counted more than once, and doubtless many in the church have been several times converted and counted.

But we needed not to be left to probabilities in this case. Mr. Wise had access to the means of

giving the precise information. The records of the churches would have told how many have come in, and how many have gone out, and by a few strokes of the pen he could have put all doubt to rest on this point. And why did he not? Is any other reason apparent, than that he did not wish us to know the facts. The manner in which he has treated this subject, makes me more sure than I was, that the proportion which I named was not far from the truth. We begin to feel almost a compassion for our Methodist neighbors, and hardly have a heart to state the worse result, which we have now in reserve. After making this comparison for nine years, we were induced to go further back. So taking the minutes for 1843, and counting all as members that are put down as members, we found that at that date the Lynn membership stood as follows: Wood End 200, South street 273, Common 430; total 903. In the minutes of the present year, Lynn stands as follows: Common street 305, Union street 130, South street 157, Maple street 95, Boston street 148; total 835. That is a loss of 68 in twelve years. In these twelve years the population of the town has nearly doubled; so that compared with the population, the Methodist interest has fallen of about one half in twelve years. Now we would suggest, that the boasting

of which we have quoted a specimen, is not in good taste when it comes out on the basis of such facts.

Mr. Wise tells us that there are two thousand members of evangelical churches in Lynn. He must give an enlarged liberality to the term evangelical, to make it out. This may be a specimen of the liberality of which the writer above quoted boasts. Mr. Wise tells us that it is common in revivals for many blossoms to perish. But that is not an answer to the difficulty arising from the fact that in our churches the backsliding is the exception, and in the Methodist churches it is the rule, and the real conversions are the exceptions.

INJURING THE REPUTATION OF LYNN.

Mr. Wise suggests that I have injured the reputation of Lynn, and that most ungratefully, since Lynn has given me a living, and liberty of speech, for twenty years. God forbid that I should do injury to the people of Lynn, or cast indiscriminate reproach on their characters. To *people in* Lynn, I am under great obligations, and greatly attached by our common sufferings. As Paul was wont to boast of his people, I am in habit of doing the like of mine, as my book abundantly shows. The trials of their position, and blessing of God upon them, have made them

to me a people to be chosen before all others. Nor is my regard for Lynn confined to my own sect. I recognize in other sects, including the Methodists, many high-minded and valuable men, who would do honor to any place, and from whom I have received all the consideration that I have deserved. And yet to the controlling spirit and character of Lynn, my obligations are less. But whatever they are, I fondly hope to be able to *discharge them fully*. It is an object of my labor every day, to be an instrument of as much benefit to Lynn, as she shall have been to me ; so as not to die in her debt. This purpose animates me in some of the self-denying labors which I have undertaken, and in enduring the contradiction of sinners, which is incidental to a course of duty in Lynn. I hope I am not ungrateful for the liberty to breathe, and the liberty to speak, which Lynn has allowed me, — though the liberty of speech has been somewhat severely contested by my various opponents, and if some threats given out were rightly interpreted, my liberty to breathe was not wholly undisputed. If Lynn has been truly represented in her Methodist literature which has transpired during the last six months, her liberty of speech has been at least one-sided, and her embraces as a foster mother have not been the most soothing.

As to my injuring her reputation — who does the injury, those that rebuke, or those that foster her wickedness? and which, think you, has injured the character of Lynn the most: the few pages which I published, or the floods of literature, characteristic of Lynn, to which the spirit and occasions of Methodism here have given rise? Does not Lynn support the periodical literature of Lynn? and are not the features of Lynn reflected in that literature? And then does not Lynn do herself the injury, in thus publishing her own character abroad?

Mr. Wise denies that Lynn has the peculiar characteristics which I ascribed to it. As to that, I assumed what was known to all men, and if it is not thus known, then my argument was harmless, and I freely abandon it. He gives statistics of police courts in different places, and statistics of sittings in churches. As to the first, very little can be learned from them in Lynn, since the appointment of the judge of our police court, who has the character of being very judicious, and careful not to take up a complaint without serious cause. In Newburyport, we are informed, that till recently the police judge was paid by his fees, and not by salary, and that cases from all the neighboring towns are wont to be tried

there — whereas the reverse is true, in every respect, in Lynn. So these police reports can tell nothing of the comparative morality of the respective places. Further, I have been informed by one who was many years connected with the police department in Salem, that a very large portion of the cases occurring there were cases of men from Lynn, who were in mischief there. As to sittings in churches, we have need to know whether they are sittings under Christianity, or under its opposites, before they indicate the morality of a place.

Mr. Wise demurs to my representation that Methodism is the leading cause of Lynn's peculiar characteristics. And yet I see not that we differ here. He points out other and subordinate causes, and I admitted that there were such; he concedes that for sixty-five years Methodism has been "the leading formative power in Lynn," and this is all I ask.

He finds some apostate Congregationalists acting as leading men among the come-outers, and hence infers that our system had much to do in the creation of their movement. One swallow does not make a summer. As Lynn was the gathering place of those spirits, we had the advantage of knowing them all. From the whole range of the

country, there came in some three or four persons who had been Congregationalists. Of the many hundreds I knew of no more. And not one of these was of Lynn. And why did they choose Lynn for their rookery? Because they found here more sympathy, more aid and more kindred spirits, than anywhere else. Christopher Robinson, a foremost man among the Methodists, did more than any other by his money and labor to sustain them. He, for many years, at great expense, published their paper, and he gave hundreds at a time to their agents. So great was the sympathy of Methodists with them at one time, that their church seemed to be near a rent. I had ocular inspection of something of the movement then, having attended a meeting in the Methodist vestry, when Rev. Mr. Sunderland, then a crack Methodist preacher, now as crack a spirit-rapper, was the leading spirit. Whatever support those men may have had from other sources, it is plain that they never would have found encouragement for their beginnings here, had it not been for the broad sympathy, and the convenient materials which they found, in those who were and those who had been under Methodist influence.

THE AFFAIR AT SWAMPSCOTT.

Mr. Wise introduces Mr. Best, who was the Methodist preacher at Swampscott the last year, to controvert what I had said of Methodist operations there. He says that Swampscott was not neglected by Methodists before we went there. But he does not say that they had not neglected to build a church there — the thing which we affirmed. He says there were no signs of revival before the Methodist meetings were commenced there. But it so happens that such signs had been reported in public meetings of ministers, and had otherwise come to my knowledge before that. He says the Methodist society in Swampscott was never a *mission*. Perhaps not, in the technical sense of the Methodists. But if he had been *sent* thither by his bishop, it was a mission in the general sense in which I used the word. In either case, it is a mere quibble about a matter of no consequence. He denies that he went in unasked, and took the control of one of Mr. Clarke's meetings. But from his own statement it does not appear that he was invited by Mr. Clarke, or any member of his church. He denies that he urged females to speak. That he did, we had not affirmed. As to changing the

times of his evening meetings, he admits the fact, but denies that it was done to thwart Mr. Clarke's meetings. Of his *motives* we can say nothing, any further than they were inferred from the facts. He denies having solicited any of Mr. Clarke's people to leave him — a thing of which we did not accuse him. He notices the allegation that his church originated with "backsliders," but he does not deny it. He answers by saying that Congregational churches would be glad to build with such timber. The reader will judge from the points here raised, and the answers given, how far from the truth my statement was.

A noticeable characteristic of the replies to my book appears in the manifested feeling of Methodism, that it has a right to command the silence of other sects, respecting its errors, while it uses all liberty in relation to them. This I noticed in my strictures. And new illustrations have now come out; for instance, Zion's Herald took the Boston Traveller severely to task for having dared to commend the book. He said:

Are we to understand the *Traveller* as endorsing Mr. Cooke's "Estimate of Methodism" by this notice? Is the endorsement of such an extremely bigoted book consistent with its professions of unsectarianism? Its Methodist patrons

would like to have these inquiries answered. They would like to know if it intends to lend itself to Parsons Cooke's proposed crusade against the M. E. Church.

The Congregationalist also came under a like frown of the Herald, for the same offence.

The Congregational Board of Publication was also labored with indirectly, for a mere suspicion of an intent to publish the work. Leading Methodists in Boston requested leading Congregationalists to converse with members of the committee of the Board, and dissuade them from publishing it. This was wholly a needless task. For the Committee of the Board were never asked to be its publishers; not one of them, excepting myself, ever saw it till it was published, and its publication was nearly complete before this intercession took place. Yet it is instructive to see Methodists aspiring to control, not their own boards, but ours. Suppose our Board, expressly existing for denominational purposes, had ventured to publish one book as denominational as that—a book, by the way, which has secured the commendation of our denominational press with almost unparalleled unanimity;—would Methodists have had a right to complain? Think of their immense Book Concern, and the aggressive character of its issues. And then

think of such an attempt by Methodists, to muzzle the Congregational press. Upon what meat has our neighbor fed, that he now aspires to this?

TYRANNY OF THE WEAK OVER THE STRONG.

There is such a thing as the tyranny of the weak over the strong. We illustrated it in the case of a small band of Methodists coming into Congregational societies, and setting afloat slanders about infant damnation and the like, and when the assailed undertook a defence, setting up the cry of persecution by the strong against the weak. It has been by working on this principle, that they have well-nigh achieved for themselves an immunity from questioning, together with a liberty for all aggressions. They have been looked upon as the weaker vessel, claiming special honor as such, and it has been held as odious to hold them to the same account as we do others. When they have begged money to build their churches, and carry on their sectarian operations against us, we have not withheld, though aware to some extent of the pernicious working of their system. In the smaller towns throughout the State, not a small share of the property in Methodist churches has been contributed by Congregationalists. In many places it is common to have donation parties for

Methodist ministers, in which appeals are made to the generosity of Congregationalists. These come in and give a considerable portion of what is given, out of personal regard for the minister. Then by the usage of the church, the proceeds of the gifts are charged to the minister in his account for the salary, and thus we are made to aid in support of their ministry. In all their progress, Methodists have had the privilege of the weaker vessel, and in using it have acquired a prescriptive claim to say what they will themselves, and gainsay whom they will. There is in this a distant approach to that absurd tyranny of the weak over the strong which existed in darker days, when the mendicant order, or the begging friars, ruled the churches, not to say the princes of Europe, with a rod of iron. And we have yet to settle the question, whether we will use our liberty of speech, or surrender it to a sect that is so free to speak of all others and so unwilling to be spoken of.

But it has been said that I ought not to have touched this subject, because the church needs all her strength against a common enemy, and has none to spare in friction between different sects. But what if it should appear, as I have attempted to show, that Methodism is a common enemy of Christianity, a great corrupting cause? If this shall

appear, as I flatter myself I have shown very clearly, and intend to show still further, that difficulty vanishes. But if it were not so, the serious errors of any Christian sect ought to be pointed out, otherwise you would protect and sanction all errors and corruptions. But Methodism is the last sect that should take up this plea against disturbing the common peace of the sister band of churches, for she invariably makes aggressions on the peace of churches whenever she can find an opportunity. She stands aloof from all coöperations with other sects, unless she can first be sure of a sectarian advantage. Her beginning in almost every place has been a kindling of strife among Christians; an assault with charges of infant damnation. And is this sect, whose hand is against every man, perpetuating the like of Ishmael, — is this sect qualified to rebuke the marring of the common peace of the churches?

Another characteristic of Mr. Wise's reply has been a disclaimer of any concern for the injurious effects of my work. He says my work is not regarded by "the Methodists in Lynn as being in the smallest degree dangerous," yea, that they "regard it as too mean for anything like hearty contempt;" and yet he disclaims on behalf of these people any belief in works of supererogation. Surely these Methodists in Lynn and else-

where must be a very peculiar people. They have caused enough ink shed to fill folios, and that, it seems, on what they regard as beneath contempt. Do they raise a tempest "to waft a feather or to drown a fly," or do they profess the opposite of what they feel? If they have spent this summer's labor on a mere nothing, they ought to be ashamed of it. How will they give an account for it?

And here, by the way, is the reason why my book has been received with more favor by the Christian public than so many abler discussions that have preceded it. Hitherto when our writers have entered remonstrances against the evils of Methodism, the great body of our own people have frowned upon them. The writers admitted that Methodism was on the whole a good thing, but sadly perverted, and the readers have said, If, then, it is a good thing, let it alone, and not be raising needless strife among Christians. But having struck at the root of the evil, and demonstrated so much to the general conviction that Methodism is on the whole an evil, I have carried with me to every man's conscience a good reason for all the troubles connected with a probing of this sore. Hence I received words of approbation and encouragement from sources whence I expected only frowns.

CHAPTER II.

THE METHODIST THEORY OF THE CHURCH. — WESLEY'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER. — HIS ANTI-REPUBLICAN PRINCIPLES. — THE TRANSFER OF HIS POWER TO BISHOPS. — HIS LETTER TO ASBURY. — NO CHECKS UPON THE BISHOPS. — TYRANNY OVER THE UNDER CLERGY. — THE INTRIGUES OF THE CLERGY. — THE WORKING CLERGY STARVED. — AGITATION FOR CHANGES. — CHARACTER OF THE CLERGY FORMED IN CRAMPING IRONS. — METHODIST SCALE OF OFFENCES. — TIME-SERVING.

IN the preceding chapter we have said all that we have occasion to say, in the way of reply to opponents. Nor should we have thought it needful to say that, had we not a more important work to perform; for the common sense of impartial readers would have corrected most of the errors in argument and statement which we have corrected. But as many would expect some reply, and so it would be a fit occasion to claim another reading from the public, which has given such a broad welcome to my first production, I felt myself called in Providence to improve this opportunity, to present another collection of facts, in illustration of my main point, which is, that THE

M. E. CHURCH OF THE UNITED STATES IS A CORRUPT AND CORRUPTING CORPORATION, and that the best interests of religion require that it should cease. It has been my design not to entangle the reader in a maze of abstruse discussions of doctrine or principles of church polity. Matters of fact are the most intelligible and impressive arguments. The *fruits* of the corrupt tree give the best conviction that it is corrupt.

But in order to a proper appreciation of the facts, and to show how they come out as results of the system, I must first, in a few words, present the structure and theory of the Methodist Episcopal church. The evils of which we complain flow from two sources, the false doctrines taught and the despotic principles of church government enforced. As to the former, I have here little to say. They might be shown to be the prime source of all the evils, and even the source of the despotic form of government itself. But that would carry me beyond my purpose, to deal chiefly with facts.

“ But what concern of yours is this system of government, which these people have chosen for themselves? If they are satisfied with it, what right have you to complain of it? The laws of the land guarantee to all the use of such church

constitutions as they prefer." We complain of no infringement of the laws of the land. We bring our complaint to another tribunal, for an infringement of the laws of Christ, in which every Christian, as a Christian, is interested. We purpose to show that this engine of ecclesiastical tyranny has wrought out results which have spread disasters over the country. And if this be so, are not the whole people concerned in the operations of this engine? True, it encloses its fires, its puffing, steaming and smoking, within its own premises. But if it generates a miasma that spreads disease and death abroad, then we have a right and obligation to hold an inquest upon it. The Jesuits are doubtless satisfied with *their* system too. To accomplish its purposes, they submit without complaint to its grinding tyranny. But they are not alone concerned in the results. The whole world has no enemy more hostile to its highest interests, and more to be dreaded in its success, than Jesuitism. If Methodism were to be isolated and hermetically sealed up, so as to exert no influence on the world, then the world would have no concern with it. But it lives for no such purpose. It is the most aggressive of all systems. And the corrupt leaven which it generates, it employs its whole energies to diffuse in

every nook and corner of the land. And when so many activities are employed to diffuse it, are we not concerned to canvass its nature and test its corruption?

THE METHODIST THEORY OF THE CHURCH.

This assumes that God has given all church power to one or more bishops, to reign absolute over the whole body of associated Christians in a nation. This power comes not by apostolical succession. It is not pretended to be conveyed through the Scriptures. But it is claimed to be a product of Providence, first in the person of John Wesley, then in the bishops as his successors. But coming from this source *providentially*, the power is claimed to be an absolute and unquestioned gift of God. The bishops claim to rule by the grace of God, as really as do the despotic monarchs of Europe. How this power grew up in the hands of Wesley, he himself shall tell us. — See Whithead's *Life of Wesley*. He says: "In November, 1738, two or three persons, who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more, came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can. More and more then desired to

meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The same was afterwards true at Bristol, and many other parts of England, Ireland and Scotland. Here commenced my power, namely, a power to appoint where and when and how they should meet; and to remove those who showed that they had not a desire to flee from the wrath to come. And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thousand." But this increase created a necessity for assistants, and for divisions into congregations, and subdivisions into classes. Here originated classes and class leaders. This increase also demanded appropriate buildings and funds, and assistants to manage them. So he says: "Afterwards, I desired one or two men to assist me as stewards, and in process of time a greater number. Let it be remembered, that it was I myself, not the people, who chose these stewards, and appointed to each a distinct work, wherein he was to help me as long as I desired; and herein I began to exercise another sort of power, namely, that of appointing and removing stewards."

"After a time a young man came and desired to help me, as a son in the gospel; soon after a second, and then a third. These severally desired

to serve me as sons, and to labor when and where I should direct. Observe these likewise desired me, not I them, but I durst not refuse their assistance ; and here commenced my power, to appoint each of these when and where and how to labor ; i. e., while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased ; as I had to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still to appoint, when and where and how each should help me, and to tell any (if I saw cause) ‘ I do not desire your help any longer.’ On these terms, and on no other, we joined at first, and on these terms we continue joined.”

This is truly a plausible history of the innocent origin of a despotic power. It reminds one of Othello’s “round unvarnished tale,” which was the simple cause of wondrous fascination. Here is the simple origin of the most perfect church despotism. It seems all fair and right, but it overlooks the fact, that a combination of immortal beings, growing up under Wesley’s spiritual administration, conducted in the name of Christ, is not Wesley’s property. It forgets that the individual ministers and hearers have individual

consciences, and each his own relations and responsibilities to God ; that the pastor of a congregation, by whatever providential steps he may have come into that relation, has rights and responsibilities to Christ, and to his people, flowing from his being the minister of Christ and the servant of a people for Christ's sake. And he who assumes, under whatever pretence, to domineer over this minister of Christ, and to say Go, and Come, or Leave the service at my bidding, arrogates to himself the work of Christ. He allowed his ministers to call no man master, because one was their Master, even Christ. But Wesley's system, so plausibly set forth in this simple tale of its origin, appoints a human master over every minister, and subjects his whole work to the dictation of a man no better than himself.

Wesley's whole experience had formed him to the habits and feelings of a despot. He said " I am no republican, and never intend to be. While I live, the people shall have no voice in choosing either stewards or class leaders." And this law has been stereotyped in his system. So that he being dead, yet speaketh. Southey, in his *Life of Wesley*, informs us that Wesley was a determined opponent of the American Revolution ; that he argued against the principle that representation

should accompany taxation. And well he might; for that principle would annihilate his system. He argued that the people had a right to nothing but protection from the government whom they were bound to obey. He plead for the tea-tax as legal and reasonable (p. 306); said that the war of the Revolution was to be traced to the Puritan origin of the colonies. He said that the greatest degree of liberty was to be enjoyed under a monarchy. His opposition to our war of independence was most intense. He said of it, I am "pleading the cause of my king and country, yea of every country;" "pleading against those principles that naturally tend to anarchy and confusion." And he earnestly endeavored to enlist the whole Methodist body against the American cause. In a letter dated 1782, he says: "Two or three years ago, when the kingdom was in great danger, I made an offer to the government of raising men;" thus it was owing to the moderation of the British government, such it was, more than to the principles of Methodism, that its leader did not take his spiritual power into the work of recruiting sergeant for the British army, to raise men among Methodists for the butchery of our fathers.

But let us have Wesley's own sense of the nature of his power, so innocently acquired. He says,

"It is the power of admitting into and excluding from the societies under my care, of choosing and removing stewards, of receiving or not receiving helpers, of appointing them when and where and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me, when I saw good." Here churches are deprived of their proper name and rights. They are not called churches, or treated as churches of Christ; but "societies under my care." This habit of speech has been carried out to this day. The head clergy treat them not as churches, in which Christ has a right to rule, or his laws are to be observed; but as "societies under my care," "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified." And hence they have no right to claim that others shall regard them as the church of Christ. Every part of the system, even to church membership, thus came under the control of its founder, and by him it was transferred to the head clergy, who profess to hold it by the warrant of the same providence that brought it into his hands.

Mr. Wesley considered his power of ABSOLUTE DICTATOR, as essential to the life and thrift of his system. In a letter on this subject, (Whitehead, Vol. 2, p. 218,) he says: "It is not good that the supreme power should be lodged

in many hands; let there be one chief governor." He resisted all encroachments upon his power, with firmness. When the ministers were disposed to urge certain rights of Conference, he read a paper, wherein he says: "The rules of our preachers were fixed by me before any Conference existed; particularly Rule 12, namely: 'Above all, you are to preach *when and where I appoint.*' I permitted them to join me on these conditions. Whoever, therefore, violates these conditions, particularly of being directed by me in the work, does by that act disjoin himself from me." When some ministers intimated that they had a right to some voice respecting the duties of their office, he said: "So they have; they have a right to disjoin themselves from me whenever they please; but they cannot, in the nature of the thing, join with me any longer than they are directed by me." Here lies the parent *crime* of the system. It employs men to do work as ministers of Christ, and yet denies them the right to judge of their duties as his ministers, and to act under their simple responsibility to Christ. It assumes to dismiss them from the work of Christ, to rupture relations which Christ's work has generated, and annihilate a function which Christ has given, and to do that as the penalty of not obey-

ing the dictate of a worm. Well says Wesley's biographer — "The very nature and design of a Methodist society differ essentially from the definitions hitherto given of a church." It required too much audacity, in the early stages of the work, to call these combinations under the absolute despotism of one man, churches of Christ, as much as it would to give that name to a Masonic Lodge. Accordingly, for a long time they were not called churches, nor were church ordinances administered in them. The absurdity of one man's ruling thus *in a church of Christ* was too manifest. Wesley would have ruined his power if he had at first assumed a church existence for his unique societies or lodges. It required the work of time gradually to reconcile the mind to such a monstrosity. The church of Christ was not there, because the power of Christ was shut out from the control of her ministers and people.

But what was to be done when the sceptre should fall from the hand of the expiring patriarch? He prepared a paper, which was to be his deed of succession, but he could not induce his ministers to sign it, and thus sign away their liberties after his decease. Seven years before his death, an instrument was executed, called "*the Deed of Declaration.*" Previous to this the chapels and

church property had been deeded to trustees to hold them to be used by persons under the direction of John Wesley. This deed of declaration provided, that after the decease of both John and Charles Wesley, the said trustees should grant the use of the chapels to such persons as they should appoint. This deed declared the Conference to consist of the 100 Methodist preachers then existing, and their successors. So this deed, conveying the property to the use of the Conference, became the charter and organic law of the Methodist body in England.

As Wesley did not call his society a church, he did not ordain ministers, nor sanction their administering ordinances, till in the eighty-second year of his age.

He first ordained some to send over to America. Then he ordained Dr. Coke as a bishop for America, and by that act provided for a branch of his power to extend itself in succession over this continent. But what right had he to make a bishop? His right, such as it was, came not from his ordination in the Church of England, where he was a presbyter; not from the Bible, but from his power providentially received as Patriarch of the Methodists. In a Methodist society formed for merely social and spiritual improve-

ment, his power would have been rightful if men would submit to it. But as soon as these societies assumed to be so many churches of Christ, and bound by the laws of Christ under the ordinance of the gospel ministry, holding relations of pastor and people, receiving sacraments from the hands of Christ's ministers, then Christ had come in as the Ruler, and it became John Wesley to retire from the rule. Now the Methodist body is either John Wesley's society, or it is Christ's church. If it is Christ's church, the worm has assumed in it the place of the Lord. Christ's ministers are there under a special injunction not to have a man-master. And every voice of reason, humanity, and Christianity cries, John Wesley ! Hands off ! What do you here, wielding the sceptre of the world's Redeemer ! coming in between Christ's commissioned ministers (ministers, responsible through their own conscience to Him for every act,) and saying to this man Go, and he goeth, and to that man, Come, and he cometh !

But we are now speaking only of the matter of fact. Such was the origin and nature of Wesley's power, and such the mode of its transfer to America. In a letter to Mr. Asbury, then associated with Dr. Coke in the bishopric of America, Wesley, under date of 1788, said :

“There is a wide difference between the relation wherein you stand to the American Methodists, and the relation wherein I stand to all the Methodists. You are the elder brother of the American Methodists; I am, under God, the father of the whole family! Therefore, I naturally care for you all, in a manner no other person can do. Therefore, I in a measure provide for you all.

“But in one point, I am a little afraid both the doctor and yourself differ from me. I study to be little, you study to be great. I creep, you strut along. I found a school, you a college — nay, call it by your own names. O beware! Do not seek to be something. Let me be nothing, and Christ be all in all. One instance of your greatness has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called a bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought. Men call me a knave, a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content. But they shall never, by my consent, call me a bishop.”

This, it will be seen, touches the mere expediency of *using the title* of a bishop, and not the right of exercising the functions of a bishop; for Wesley had with his own hand conferred the functions. Wesley aimed at the reality, and not the names of power; and knew how to advance the reality by rejecting the names. This letter graphically reveals his policy of ascending the

ladder with down-cast eyes. He lets us know that he does not forget that he was the father of them all. And yet he creeps, and seeks to be nothing. The cynic philosopher, in treading the splendid carpets of Plato, said: "Thus I tread on Plato's pride." "Yes, and with greater pride," said Plato. So Wesley's greater pride creeps while that of his bishop struts.

Though transplanting his religion to republican America, he was no republican. Being enamored of despotism, he wished to bequeathe to the young nation, that had escaped the embraces of monarchy, at least the blessing of a despotism in religion. And his benevolence was as pure in this, as if he had better gifts to impart. He could say, "Such as I have give I thee." The basis of the despotic power that is now exercised here in the M. E. church may, in the light of these facts, be clearly seen. Wesley reigned as sovereign among English Methodists by right of creation. Having made them as a body politic, he supposed that he had a right to rule them as such. That right to rule by creation descended to his immediate successors, named and ordained by him to hold his sceptre in America, and thus the way was prepared for it to descend by perpetual succession. Each bishop now has a John Wesley in him, and

is, in virtue of that indwelling spirit of Wesley, an absolute despot in the affairs of the church. The division of power among the several bishops is like that in ancient Rome, when there were colleague emperors. Each was absolute over the province which for the time being he ruled. Bishops have subordinates in office, but not to check their power, any more than the generals checked the power of the Cæsars who commissioned them. They have Conferences, whose action and deliberations are used as lights for the direction of their own actions, and not as any effectual checks upon their plans or wills. For every mother's son of the Conference is ecclesiastically their bond-slave. And if the action of one of them displeases them, the final act of the Conference will settle that account. For then the appointments are read off, and the impliable minister has walking papers to Siberia, or some other field as desolate. The current phraseology of Methodist literature and speech is constructed with a view to conceal this despotism. This may be seen at every turn. Take one instance out of many. The current phrase is, that *the Conference sends the preachers* to this and that station, while in truth the Conference has nothing to do with sending a preacher, has not even the shadow, or the

formality of an act in the case. The bishop, in secret conclave with his tools, the presiding elders and his back-door advisers, makes out appointments of each minister, and then reads off the mission of each. Instead of the Conference sending any one, the Conference is sent. The whole body disperses, and each goes to his place as one sent by his single master, and the behest of the Conference is no way represented in the act of sending. If such a phrase as the "Conference sent a minister" were used of such a thing by a Hibernian, it would be regarded as an Irish idiom.

CHECKS UPON THE BISHOPS.

There is in the Methodist system a fair show of checks upon the power of the bishops. But it is only a show. They are like Napoleon, surrounded by legislative bodies of his own erecting out of his creatures. These Conferences go through their forms of action, and discuss many matters, and have many things in their own way, where their way concurs with that of the bishops. But they are held by a tether, which hinders their crossing the path of the bishops in any thing. To make a show of a bishop's responsibility to his clergy, or his creatures, the Discipline provides for bringing bishops to trial. They can be brought

to trial for immoralities, but not for transcending any limits of their power; for their power has no limits which they can transcend. There is no ecclesiastical law which they can break. As long as they are free from immoralities, they may exercise any tyranny in office, without being called to account. And even in case of immoralities, woe to that creature of the bishop who presumes to call his creator to an account. A journey to Siberia would be his next duty. Then all this apparatus of provisions for a bishop's trial is so much lumber. Who ever heard of the condemnation and deposition of a Methodist bishop by his dependants? Such a thing was once attempted in the General Conference in the case of Bishop Andrew. The majority did not wish him to continue in office, and he would not resign. They could not try and expel him, otherwise they would have done it. They passed a resolution which they thought would induce him to resign, but he remained a bishop still, in spite of them. The difficulty was, he had been guilty of no breach of morality, or of any of the limits of his office, and yet the majority felt that his holding the office was an injury to the church, but they could not depose him. But there are other hindrances to deposing bishops. Such a

thing indeed is a practical absurdity in a body constituted and ruled as the General Conference is. There sit all the bishops, who, each in the Annual Conference over which he is to preside, hold the dispensation of all appointments, — to raise up and pull down whom they will. Before them and around them are clustered the voting members of the body, who have electioneered for their places, perhaps in the disgraceful scramble alluded to in a quotation from a Methodist paper, hereafter to be made. They have sought these places as stepping stones to appointments to book-agencies, or professorships, or editorships, in the dispensing of which the bishop's voice is omnipotent. And these are pretty men to put the bishop on trial! Yea, it is an absurdity to speak of putting on trial, such a bishop as the one who when a member of the Conference asked for reasons, could reply, as one did in the Conference at Springfield,—“It is too late for me to give reasons for my proceedings.” The judge of the Supreme Court of the United States or of England, gives reasons for his rulings, but the “godly judgments” of the Methodist bishops come so direct from God, that the reasons may not be asked.

Another show of limitation to the Methodist monarchy is, the action of the Conference in

receiving and expelling members, and passing upon the character of members. But there is no real limit here. All is done by vote of the Conference, when the bishop has no special ends of his own to carry. But if he have such ends, his will is irresistible. If he wishes to depose a member, he could if he would command every vote. For let it be privately signified to A, B and C, that such was the bishop's judgment in the case, and the hint would be taken. And even if the vote of the Conference should save the ministerial life of the preacher, what would that life be worth when the appointments should come to be read off?

To make the control of the bishops more secure, there is not in all these Conferences or puppet legislatures, a single layman. If there were a fair proportion of the voters, who were laymen, and so not liable to be officially decapitated for their votes, there would be some check on the bishops' will. But all are travelling preachers, liable to pay the penalty of their wrong votes by their travelling. And every preacher sits and votes with the bishop's sword suspended over him, in the expectation of that hour when the bishop will draw from his pocket a paper, and read out the destiny of each. To call these

things checks on the bishops' power, were a mockery.

But this is not the worst of the tyranny: it pinches with a closer gripe as it comes down from the head into the arms and fingers of the hierarchy. For such are the presiding elders, or viceroys of the provinces or districts, into which each Conference is divided. These elders are appointed, not by the ministers, their future subjects, but by the bishop. They use his power for him, when he cannot be present to use it himself.

The Book of Discipline makes it their duty "to take charge of all the elders and deacons, travelling and local preachers, and exhorters; to change, receive and suspend preachers; to preside in Quarterly Conferences; to oversee the spiritual and temporal business of the church in the district; to take care that *every part* of our discipline be enforced." Bishop Heading in his Discourse on Discipline, or his charge to his clergy, says: "By an accurate knowledge of the gifts, grace, usefulness and general character of all the travelling preachers under his care, the same officer may be prepared to give such a representation of them [to the bishop] at the Conference, as shall determine the following points, to wit:

Who shall be advanced to the ministry; who shall be set aside for want of talents or piety, and when each man shall be appointed." Thus the character, destiny, and whole control of the preacher, are in one who is set to keep a vigilant watch over him, and report him to his master. No body of ministers can live in such subjection to an overseer, without a constant waste of all that is manly and Christian within them. Such a system is a monstrous wrong to the people, by giving them slaves for their preachers. The presiding elder spends his whole time in the exercise of a visitatorial power over ministers, preparing to give account of their doings to the bishop, at the next Conference. They meet their bishop; but the acquaintance of each individual of them with him must be slight. To compensate for this he has both a public and private review, or inspection of them. Each man's name is called over in order, for express approval or disapproval of the deeds done in his body, through the year. If no one appears to impeach him before his lord and master, the bishop, he is approved. But there is another ordeal. At private conferences between the bishop and his presiding elder, all the treasures of the elder's knowledge, observation, opinions, passions and prejudices,

gathered in relation to each minister in his district, are put into the hands of the bishop. As he must be eyes for the bishop, except when the bishop has ends of his own to answer, the appointments are given out in his district much according to his suggestion; and indeed the character and standing of the individual ministers are greatly at his mercy. If the ministers are not wholly subservient to him, during the year, they are very sure to receive their reward at the year's end. If one displeases him very much, he may know that his next appointment will be where he will be starved into submission. And if he refuses to go where he is sent, he is, by Wesley's original rule, degraded from the ministry.

The duties of ministers, as prescribed by the discipline, are so minute and strictly bound, as to aggravate the tyranny of the case. The minister at his ordination promises before God in the most solemn manner, "reverently to obey his chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over him, following with a glad mind to their godly admonitions, and submitting himself to their godly judgments." The discipline requires the minister "to mind *every point, great and small*," in the Book of Discipline. Some of these small points are of questionable

propriety, such as to "take no step towards marriage, without first consulting the brethren,"—such as "Tell every one under your care, what you think wrong in his conduct." Such as "to suspend every member who marries an unbeliever, and to require all to take no step in marriage without the advice of their brethren;" such as to administer church censures to those who wear superfluous dress, or ornaments, "enormous bonnets, ruffles or rings;" such as the rule which requires of Methodists the habit of "employing them [the household of faith] preferably to others, buying one of another, and helping each other." Now the preacher is bound to execute the discipline in these small things, as well as great. If his judgment and conscience rebel, there is his vow, he must do it. If the General Conference change the rules, he is bound not to do what his vow would now bind him to do. There is a power above him, and not the power of God, saying *sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas*.

Here is a crushing power squeezing out the last remnants of the manly sense of responsibility to God. The presiding elders are, and are made to be the most pliant tools of the bishop. They are appointed and dismissed at his pleasure.

Their appointments are usually gained by much intriguing and currying favor, and they are retained no longer than a man's ways please the bishop. This makes their subserviency to him a fixed and universal fact. To have a mind and will of their own is impossible. Then the under clergy form their character on a field where whatever earthly ambition exists, takes the form of effort to win the smiles of an earthly lord. It is to be presumed, that many of them, while very young men and imperfectly educated, enter the ministry with unsophisticated minds, and with a simple desire to preach the gospel — with little idea of what is before them. But when they have entered the field, they find that their influence is to be increased only by that thrift that follows cringing. They find that promotions are reached, with few exceptions, not by superior talents or devotedness, or success in their work, but by all the arts best known to those who are mere wrigglers into place. While now and then one of commanding force of character gets a position which the hierarchy cannot so well control, he secures a professorship or an editor's chair, and his presence little interrupts the motions of the "Great Iron Wheel," by which the individuality of the others is crushed.

The wrigglers into place, of course, in various ways act with and upon the presiding elder, so as by bargain to control to some extent their appointments beforehand. And the more desirable appointments are usually forestalled in this way. The theory is, that no minister shall electioneer for appointments, and that none shall even know what appointment he is to have till it is read off at the finale of the Conference. But then while some simple ministers and ministers' wives receive with submissive tears their doom to some desert field, the favored one takes his appointment to the land of Goshen with no more surprise than grief. To show that some are not kept ignorant of their future appointment, Mr. Butler, now of Lynn, when in Westfield, caused it to be published in a Westfield paper, that his ministry there was to end with the Conference year, before he had been there a whole year. But how did he know but that the "godly judgment" of the bishop, to which he had pledged himself to submit, would favor him with another year's ministry in that very pleasant village? This shows that there is a possibility of looking behind the curtains that conceal the cabinets of "godly judgment."

It is a very natural result in a body so constituted — such is human nature and such the

temptations in the case, — that there should be in every Conference a *clique* that assumes in relation to the rest, the character of an aristocracy —controlling matters much as they please. As far as our information extends, such a clique exists in fact in most Conferences. An interchange of favors between them and the appointing power is kept up; and they are brought into great temptation to sacrifice a good conscience and that manliness which belongs to the devoted minister of Christ. They have their gain by being loud in the praises of Methodism, prolific in speeches and newspaper articles — they are eloquent as to the duty of leaving the whole matter of appointments with the bishops and presiding elders. But these speakers are not always willing for a self-application of their principles. For they have usually managed to make sure of the best places for themselves before the speeches are made. And usually this class of ministers know beforehand where their appointments are to be.

This fact sometimes leaks out in an exceptional case when one is disappointed. In a Conference not far off, a few years since, there was more than usual concern exhibited as to future fields of labor. One of this class of ministers, who had not experienced much of the “shady side” of

the itinerancy, made an earnest speech on the duty of not caring about appointments—averring that he was never anxious on that point—never interfered, but left the whole matter in the hand of God. Soon it was whispered to him that his name had been set down for a certain place very unlike what he was expecting. He went to the bishop, remonstrated, and succeeded in changing the appointment to his mind. This class of ministers, of course, are in a state of transition from the best places in the itinerancy to more permanent and lucrative situations. The process of seeking these lies through the General Conference. So there is a world of wire-pulling to get appointments from the Annual or State Conferences to the General Conference, where the lucrative offices are to be dispensed. Little of this, of course, comes before the public eye. But the existence of the thing may be seen in complaints made about it by a Methodist minister, evidently of the Oneida Conference, writing through the Northern Christian Advocate. Speaking of the choice of delegates, he says:

“In casting our votes we must eschew and detest all wire-pulling, cunning, policy men; men who watch the direction of the popular current, and change their views accordingly; who come

to you smilingly, and congratulating you upon your success during the past year, or, sympathizing with your trials, proceed to draw your attention to the great crisis which is coming upon the church, and with solemnity well put on, express their deep solicitude lest the ship break upon the rocks because the right men are not sent to the General Conference. These are they who meddle so much and so secretly with their appointments from year to year, who figure for the presiding eldership, who hang around the bishop in fawning sycophancy, and who sacrifice personal piety to hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness. They cannot be trusted for an hour. Let them never represent us when great interests are at stake."

If there were no such thing as we have spoken of, this article, appearing in a Methodist paper, would not have been written.

One vice of the English church is copied in Methodism. Its high official clergy are well-fed, and the working clergy are starved. Those who bear the heaviest burdens have the least compensation. This results from the peculiar structure of the hierarchy. The greatest portion of the ministers are young men, most of them imperfectly educated; and the greatest portions of the congregations are small, and able to give but a small support. Many of the young men have

been induced to come into the Conference from a simple desire to preach the Gospel, and are willing to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Before they come in they know nothing of the self-seeking and the manœuvres to which the system, in its action on ambitious minds, gives rise. They have no idea of what crooked dealings the officials and the wire-pullers are capable. If they themselves are not susceptible to the many temptations which they have to do the same, they toil on, it may be some years, in the simplicity of their desire to promote religion, and their willingness to suffer in the cause. These are the men to fill the smaller places, and to live on half salaries. The ladder of preferment here is not climbed but by those who have much practice and skill in climbing. The large and able churches are the objects of ambition with the experts in that line ; so are also the offices of presiding elders, editors, book agents, and the like. In these offices every one has his whole salary. One would think that the people would pay their immediate pastors the best. But by some process it comes out, that while only a fraction of the travelling preachers' allowance, in a large proportion of cases, is paid, the presiding elders have their whole salary ; and complaints are made that

book agents sometimes very effectually provide for number one. Mr. M'Caine tells us of one travelling preacher, who went into the book-room, and when he came out his accounts would not balance by forty thousand dollars. He tells of another travelling preacher who went into the connection poor, who had married no money, had no legacies, but after being several years a book-agent, he died worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

It is not to be supposed that men are attracted to the Methodist ministry as a field for advancing their fortunes ; for there is hardly any course of life that promises less in this regard than the travelling ministry. The privations and sufferings which come upon those that fill the smaller stations must be great. The result of this is, that the men of the most force of character soon get into the line of promotion, or find it necessary to locate and take up other business. The vice of the system is, that it makes a strong appeal to what is selfish in man to engage in a scramble for the prizes which it offers, whether in the form of preferment or emolument. Instead of leaving the stations for ministers open to the free election of the people, and the ordinary disposal of Providence, all the desirable places are made the stake of a game, in which the most expert players are

sure to win, and some of the players improve such opportunities as offer to play for money. As an instance of what now and then occurs in this line, I will give a case, on the authority of one who was so connected with the history that he could not be mistaken, and whose character forbids the thought of misrepresentation. There is in Massachusetts a society composed chiefly of Methodists, but for prudential reasons not connected with the Conference. Of course it chose its own ministers. For convenience, it engaged the presiding elder to send it supplies from Sabbath to Sabbath, till it could find a suitable minister to act as a stated supply. It paid him ten dollars a Sabbath for the supplies, which he sent—continuing this arrangement till it could find a minister for more permanent service. The elder went to A, B and C, ministers not in employment, and induced them to go and supply, each a Sabbath, as a matter of benevolence, he paying them only their fare, which was a trifle, and pocketing the rest of the ten dollars himself. While matters were in this train, his interests were against their having a stated supply. And when ministers went thither to preach, who might be willing to engage as a stated supply, he took measures to prevent such an engagement. So this profitable agency con-

tinued for a long time. This elder, in at least one other case, executed a like commission, and in how many other cases we know not. Nor do we know how common such perquisites are.

But while the ministers high in office can improve their position, to the advantage of their finances, the greatest part of the working clergy are put on short allowance. Their allowance, according to their rules, is small enough, if they could receive the whole. But they often come far short of this. Take, for instance, the minutes of the Conference which embraces the largest part of Massachusetts, including Boston and the cities of Massachusetts, with the exception of New Bedford. The minutes of this Conference for 1847, show that the aggregate deficiency of salaries was in that year \$10,527, and the preceding year \$10,000. And ten thousand is no trifle on salaries so small; and yet the M. E. Church boasts of containing more wealth than any other sect in the country. To make up their deficiencies of salary, the travelling preachers sometimes receive a pittance from the profits of the Book Concern, but it is nothing in proportion to the deficiencies. These profits are reckoned as the property of the travelling preachers, and sacred to this very purpose of supplying their deficiencies.

Yet the managers of the fund, the book-agents and the high officials in the church are liberally paid with salaries, that are certain to be received to the full amount, and they often receive a bonus from the fund after having received every dollar of their salary. Mr. Cooper, a book-agent, received a salary for his agency in New York, and at the same time a salary for his work as a travelling preacher in Brooklyn, and in addition to these, the Conference voted him a bonus of a thousand dollars. It is no wonder that he died rich. Mr. Emory, a book-agent, afterwards bishop, also received a bonus of a thousand dollars. It might be said that these bonuses were given for special merit. And yet they were given to men who had permanent homes and whole and sure salaries, and given to men of wealth, out of a fund which was created for supplying the deficiencies of half-starved ministers, when those ministers' deficiencies were left unsupplied; and yet these men kept on short allowance do the most undesirable and toilsome part of the work.

Now look at the position of the working clergyman in the M. E. Church, and see how much there is in it to unman him, and crush out the vitality, force, and all the generous attributes of his character. A sense of independence on man

and responsibility to God, is a prime element in a minister of God — difficult to be maintained in the best position; but systematically and intentionally crushed by the structure of this hierarchy. The young man has come into the body, little knowing the internal friction of the machine, and the disturbances caused in it by the play of earthly ambitions — little knowing by how many feet he was to be trod upon, that others might rise to power — little knowing to what an extent he was to surrender his liberty, and subserve the pleasure and designs of other men. But now the fetters are on him. He must go where he is sent, and do as he is commanded by his petty taskmasters. If he has a conscience, which dictates differently from their caprice or interest, he must suppress its dictates in fear of the penalty of degradation from the ministry. Here is one reason why the introduction of the habit of giving a liberal education to the ministers has created trouble. Educated ministers will not often consent to do the drudgeries and the slaveries of such an economy. The result is, that those of the liberally educated, who have not the grace of progress in the line of promotion, and do not soon attain to the high places, or the professorships, or the editorships, or the book agencies, or the

presiding elderships, or the bishoprics, are found either seceding to other denominations, or agitating for changes in the Methodist system. Hence the discussions which now fill the Methodist periodicals for and against organic changes. The time was when men were proscribed for expressing a desire for such changes, and when the papers were closed against the discussion. But so strong have been the heavings and throes of a desire for a change, so imperative has become the demand, that it has been deemed expedient to let the newspaper organs be open for the discussion. Education has introduced a force antagonizing with despotism, and it has made some progress. Formerly the rules were so stringent that every minister was bound "to print nothing without the approbation of one or other of the bishops." That rule has now given place. Yet the rigor of the system is little relaxed. The antagonism to that rigor which education has introduced, is gathering strength, and the agitation is spreading. But the engine is remarkably provided with safety-valves. It is instructive to see how easily discontented minds can be hushed by a fat office. Some who were once foremost among the minds threatening reform are now in leading offices, and the most charmed with the beauties of the system,

as it is. Even our friend Wise was once far gone in reform. He had come even to the jumping-off place; and then, presto! he was in office, and of course an admirer and defender of the hierarchy; and like sudden transitions from heat to cold have been experienced by many of his compeers. This thing indeed is a common matter of Methodist experience. As in the days of the Lutheran Reformation, prominent reformers were assailed with offers of a bishopric, or a cardinal's hat, so it is now with Methodist reformers, and the policy here is usually attended with more success.

That I may not be speaking without book, in what I say of the existence of the present dissatisfaction and agitation in the Methodist body, let me present to the reader an inkling of a discussion which took place in the East New York Conference, whose session was recently held in Danbury, Conn. It is from the pen of a correspondent of the Methodist Protestant. He says:

“A resolution offered by Dr. Foster, instructing the delegates to the ensuing General Conference to seek to secure the removal of the Restrictive Rule, elicited a very spirited discussion. An amendment was offered by Dr. Bangs, to limit the time to three years. The Rev. Mr. Perry op-

posed, at considerable length, any alteration in said rule whatever. He alleged that the proposed change would go to increase the power of the Episcopacy, which was already enormous; that this limitation rule was about the only check to that power: that now, whatever might be the wishes of the bishop, he could not appoint a man longer than two consecutive years in the same place. 'Remove this restriction as some propose altogether,' said he, 'and the bishop has the power to continue any preacher on a poor field of labor for any length of time.' I do not, for my part, wish to add anything to their power, which is already greater than that of the Episcopal power in any other church but one, and which can now be used for great oppression. Like the atmosphere, it presses upon all, at all times and in all places, but especially in an Annual Conference, etc. The debate grew warm and animated. The interest became intense.

"Dr. Foster, on the other side, averred that they could not longer hold their present high position in the large cities without an extension of time: that a change in this respect was demanded by an imperative necessity; that it was useless to deny that they had already suffered much loss by the workings of the Restrictive Rule; that it was injuring them in the ministry, as well as in the membership; that it had driven some of the finest minds from their pulpits, etc. After a protracted discussion, the resolution, as amended, was put and carried.

“The Conference was fated to come in contact with that growing, but vexatious and ever hateful question to the ministry of the M. E. Church, as the alleged source of acrimony, schism and contention ; I mean the question of lay delegation. The ease, however, with which the whole subject was disposed of, at least for the time being, was suggestive of diplomatic experience in such matters. A petition, urging the propriety of admitting the lay element into the councils of the church, was presented from Allen street, New York, one of the largest and most influential of their churches in that city. It was referred to a committee, who reported adversely. It was moved and seconded to adopt the report. No one seeming inclined to speak to the question, the motion was put and the report adopted ; and, so far as I could see, without one dissenting vote.”

It is a curious fact, that for the last thirty years, this same internal discontent and agitation has been kept up in the body, without producing any more visible and external results ; many of the ministers evidently groan under the tyranny, and yet cheerfully employ all their strength to uphold it. An affecting illustration of the submission which after reluctance these men show, under the voice of the bishop, when they come to the practical issue, appears from the pen of a correspondent of *Zion's Herald*, describing the winding up

of the last East Maine Conference, in June of the present year. The bishop, aware that the time of the crushing of many hopes had come, was careful to throw an anchor to the windward, before he read out the appointments. Of this, the correspondent says :

“ Bishop offered some affecting remarks. Abraham went forth, not knowing whither he should go. Exhorted us to trust in the Lord, and do good. Said he never knew a brother to get happy while speaking of a comfortable appointment; but he had seen brethren get shouting happy while saying, I have travelled 5000 miles, and preached 300 sermons, and did n't get more than \$25 for the year. His remark was responded to by numerous hearty ‘*Amens.*’ The appointments were read, and we were

‘ Away, on our joyous course, away.’

After that mysterious book was opened, we saw *some few* preachers, and preachers' wives, almost as pale as marble, standing in the church with tearful eyes. God help them.”

So, in spite of all remonstrances and internal agitation, the central power yet holds its control unchecked, and it is doing a wide-spread injury to our public interests, in that it so takes the man out of its ministers, and puts in the slave ; in

that it so corrupts and compresses its ministry into such angular, distorted and vicious shapes, and then puts such a perverted ministry to work on the public mind, instead of a ministry that renounces the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of truth commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

A ministry formed in such cramping irons, is most effectually educated to deceit. Hence, finesse and deceit are prominent characteristics of Methodist ministers. All the occasions of deceit, which are generated by the revolutions of this machine, are not open to the public eye. Methodism places great reliance on numbers, and the appointments of the ministers depend much on the numbers they are able to report. Here arises a strong temptation to deceive; a minister is sent to a place new to him, and finds, in looking over the catalogue of the church, that the number is much less than was reported. So when he comes to make his report, at the year's end, it seems too much to ask of him, that he shall sacrifice himself to make the report square with the facts. His numbers reported are his claim to a good appointment for the next year. And if he

has gained twenty-five members and found a deficiency of fifty, by reason of the false report of the last year, he is compelled to report a loss of twenty-five, when he has gained twenty-five, or he is compelled to falsify his report; that is, he is compelled either to falsify the facts, or to make a false show of figures against himself. Something like this is a very common experience.

A few years ago, a member of the Conference, who seemed to be more than usually conscientious in this matter, was sent to a place where he found, on investigation, that the number of church members was much less than had been reported by his predecessor. He published an article in the Methodist papers, stating what he had found, and severely condemning the deception practised too generally in exaggerated reports. He received for his conscientiousness a severe castigation, and his position was made so uncomfortable in the Conference that he was compelled to quit it.

The strong interest which ministers have to swell their numbers reported, puts great discredit on their reports, especially since there are so many ways in which they can retain merely nominal members. The system makes it their duty to be constantly erasing the names of backsliders. But their strong interest to swell num-

bers is a temptation to retain such names. A case recently occurred, where a young man joined the church, but in a few months discovered that his conversion was spurious. He went to his minister, and told him that he had not been converted and he wished his name to be erased. The minister replied that he had better let it stand, for perhaps he would soon be converted again. Owing to causes of this nature, we can conclude nothing else than that there is grand deception running through all accounts of numbers, in the Methodist minutes, and approximation to the truth can be reached, only by liberal allowances for exaggeration.

Another source of deception has been alluded to in another form — in connection with the donation visits, which are very common for Methodist ministers. In these cases there is a strong appeal to the liberality of Congregationalists. They see the poor man with seeming sincerity devoted to his work, and struggling with poverty; their compassions are enlisted for him; and though they have little sympathy for the principles and the cause which he sustains, they regard him as a sincere and honest man, and they are willing to see him suffer. So many Congregationalists are wont to show their liberality to Methodist minis-

ters on these occasions. Indeed the occasions are often got up of design, to draw in Congregationalists to support the Methodist ministry. And not only these, but many other, looking to the same end. A subscription is started, to get a minister a suit of clothes. It is handed round among Congregationalists, who give liberally ; the clothes are produced and charged against the minister in his account of salary. A friend gives to him a gold pencil. He dreads the gift, though he cannot civilly refuse it, because it is so much taken out of his salary, which ill allows of such purchases. Sometimes the eatables brought in and consumed by the guests in the donation parties have been charged against the minister in his account of salary. But the main advantage of such occasions is, the tax laid on those without. In the result thousands of dollars are contributed every year by persons of other sects, which the donors suppose to be given to the minister personally — having no idea that it is a gift to his people, to make their burden less. But these gifts are all reckoned into the account of his salary. Indeed, the Methodist system is most fertile in expedier for sucking its life and strength from other boudes.

Most other denominations expect to support

their own, and grow no faster than the blessing of God upon their own resources will allow. But this sect is fertile in inventions, to lay all others, and even its most direct opponents, under contribution. Then think of this way of treating ministers—the way in which this system deals with its servants, and degrades and unmans them by that dealing. The Southern slave is not so much a slave, but that he is allowed to have, as his own, the gifts that are made to him, to increase his comforts above the simple allowance of his daily bread. But it is not so with the Methodist slave. The gifts to the slave are taken to relieve the pockets of the master. And while the managers of the great book fund have now and then a bonus of a thousand dollars, the poor travelling preacher is filched of the gifts which the sight of his poverty draws from the compassions of strangers. If this system does not grind the face of the poor, tell us what does?

THE METHODIST SCALE OF OFFENCES.

It is instructive to notice that an offence against the power of the bishops is a grave matter, while heresy is a peccadillo. Mr. M'Caine, who had been long a minister of this body, in his "Defence" said: "In upwards of fifty years we have never

known but one travelling preacher expelled for false doctrine or heresy ; we have known but few that were expelled for immorality. But we have heard of many, very many who were expelled for opposing the bishop." Even the good Bishop Hedding, in his discourse on Discipline, raises the question, What shall be done in a case of Conference infected with heresy ? He says :

" But should a majority of an Annual Conference become heretical or countenance immorality, what can the General Conference do ? Other remedies may answer in some cases, yet I know of only one that can be constitutionally administered in all cases. That is, let the General Conference command the bishops to remove the corrupted majority of an Annual Conference to other parts of the work, and scatter them among the Annual Conferences, where they can be governed, and supply their places with better men, from other Conferences." Further on he says : " The bishops have authority to do this, and in some cases it might be their duty to do this, without the command of the Conference." So it seems that this honored Patriarch of the Methodist system, in a charge delivered by request to his clergy, on the organic law of his church, tells them that he knew of no way to deal with dangerous combination of hereti-

cal ministers, but to scatter them. It seems he cannot depose them for heresy or immorality; that he has no way, but to send them to preach heresy and immoralities to churches now incorrupt. How is it that Mr. Wesley's successor has such a power to merely "*go away from*" any preacher that questions his power, and not the power "*to go away from*" an immoral minister, one who preaches another gospel?

Look at this as an illustration of a point hereafter to be presented. The good bishop says of this evil, "*other remedies may answer in some cases, yet I know of only one that can be constitutionally administered in all cases.*" This is a confession that, according to the constitution and spirit of the Methodist system, a minister cannot be deposed for heresy or immorality. In the general, as we have seen, the bishop, as Wesley's successor, has a right to depose or "*go away from*" any minister, that goes away from him for any cause. But where it is a case of heresy or immorality, then there is an exception to the rule. Heresy or immorality, it would seem, is not a going away from Wesley. So he must whip the devil around the bush. He must send the heretics into other fields, and give them new ground on which to sow their tares.

But Bishop Hedding did not say this without authority from his Book of Discipline. That book has not a rule which warrants, in any express term, the deposing of a minister for heresy. And as far as I can understand its design, it does not contemplate that ministers will be deposed for it, except in some case when the Conference cannot smuggle up the matter so as to avoid odium without doing it. The words of the Discipline in answer to the question, "What shall be done in case of improper tempers, words and actions?" are significant. This offence, improper tempers, words and actions, is something specified besides immoralities, and imports the unsubmissive tempers of those kicking against the "godly judgment" of their masters. Of these the Discipline says: "The person so offending, if not cured by reprehensions from his seniors in office, shall be tried at the next Annual Conference, and if found guilty and impenitent, shall be expelled from the connection, and his name so recorded in the minutes of the Conference."

But in case of a preacher "being guilty of *some crime expressly forbidden in the word of God,*" he shall be tried; and "if he be clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from all official services in the church, *till the ensuing Annual Conference,*

at which his case shall be fully considered and determined." In the other case, the Discipline required that he be deposed outright and without ifs or ands. But in the case of *some crime*, he is to be referred to the disposal of the Conference, who have no injunction to depose him. The case is precisely the same with preachers who disseminate, publicly or privately, "doctrines which are contrary to our articles of religion." "Let the same process be observed as in case of gross immorality. But if the preacher do solemnly engage not to disseminate such erroneous doctrines in public or private, his case shall be borne with till the next Annual Conference, which shall determine the matter." See with what lenity a denial of God's truth is dealt with. If the preacher will promise to withhold, or preach contrary to his own convictions, he is permitted to go on and preach till it shall please some one to bring his case before the Annual Conference. And if by chance that should be done, then the Conference are to deal with him as they think best, being under no injunction or obligation to depose him, but carrying out, of course, the general spirit of the rules which so clearly winks at heresy. It is a fact to be put on record, that the Methodist Discipline has no rule or article which requires the deposing

of one for heresy. That matter is left wholly at the discretion of the men in power. And if they fail to depose the most gross heretic, they violate no rule, and are in no sense derelict of duty as Methodists. Hence one could be so long in the Methodist ministry, and among its ten thousand ministers not know of one deposed for heresy. Hence there have been so many Millerites in the Methodist ministry unrebuked.

COMPULSION OF TIME-SERVING.

The greatest possible curse to the church is a time-serving ministry ; and the ordinary temptations under which ministers form their character, are quite enough in the direction of time-serving. In the most favorable circumstances, where the whole field is open to a minister, and he is suffered to go freely wherever the providence of God opens a way, and if men will not hear him in one place to go where they will, it requires much force of conscience and much love of the truth, not to be brought into bondage to men, and not to form habits of time-serving. What shall we say then of a system that superadds to all these occasions of weakening a minister's conscience and independence, actual fetters to bind him down to a bondage to men, and compel him to do the bidding

of other men? But this is actually done with every Methodist minister. It is done systematically and by rule; the steady working of the Methodist machine is towards the moulding of the whole mind of the ministry, to make it as plastic as clay in the hands of the potter. Individuality and the action of mind, out of its simple sense of responsibility to God, are here put down by a force acting upon the mind, day and night. The military discipline, in which soldiers are drilled to become pliant machines, moving at the word of the commander, is not a more effectual education of mind and body to its purposes, than this machine towards the education of a race of time-servers, and supple instruments of the will of a Methodist commander.

But be it so, you will say—"May not so many minds, obeying the single impulse of a leading mind, though divested of their individual conscience, work with more force for this very concentration? as in military power, the phalanx is stronger than so many unorganized men?" They may work with more force *to some purposes*; but not to the purposes of the gospel ministry. If their ends be like those sought by the Jesuits, doubtless their force is vastly more destructive than if play were left for an individual conscience.

But the purposes of the Christian ministry, a work preëminently of the individual conscience, cannot be reached by men preaching without a conscience of their own. Gospel preaching is an ordinance of God. And God has made needful to it, not the motives of an automaton nor the voice of an instrument, but the words of a living man, proceeding warm from a human heart, inflamed with the love of truth and the love of Christ, and directed with a conscience obedient to the authority of Christ, and going hither and thither at the call of Christ. The proper life and force of a true ministry presupposes the speaking of a servant of Christ, and not the servant of a man — the speaking of one who is Christ's ambassador; the importance and force of his words lie in this, that he is Christ's ambassador, having come at Christ's call, and speaking Christ's words. Now, just so far as a man's power here interferes in the sending or withholding of the ambassador, or restraining his utterance, just so far as the minister becomes man's ambassador, so far is the proper force of gospel preaching excluded. And the interference of a man's power to restrain, hinder or turn aside the preacher's power, not only weakens, but poisons the sources of the power of gospel preaching. And the minister surrender-

ing his judgment, will and action, to the control of an ecclesiastical superior, is the most pernicious form of time-serving, for it binds his whole action, whereas the other form merely yields to casual temptations. The Methodist minister binds himself by a vow, to follow the dictation of another man; and rules of conduct, framed and enforced by another man, give shape to his whole administrations.

Now we are asked what concern is it of ours, if these people prefer to sustain for themselves such a ministry? And our simple answer is, that here is a machine constantly at work on the minds of five thousand men, most of them young and plastic, and by all the appliances of temptation and force, working them into so many instruments of a vicious action on the public mind, through a perversion of the sacred power of the gospel, turning its sweetness into the gall of asps, poisoning the flow of the river of life, and converting it to a river of death. The whole community is made to suffer in its spiritual, civil and social character, through the action of this army, trained to such a character, and to the use of their peculiar weapons. Here is a body of men set apart for the purpose of going forth and impressing what is peculiar and pernicious in the

character of Methodism, on the whole people. It is fired with a flaming zeal for this purpose. It is taught by rules to do this work, and these rules emulate the cunning and the policy of the Jesuits. It is put under vows to sacrifice individual judgment and conscience in the work. It is trained under a despotism, and put under force, and by habitual submission to force, made supple tools of just this work. It is schooled in all arts of deception, and made fertile in tricks and inventions; it is so inured to these, as to lose all sense of wrong in them. Now is it no concern of ours, that the Methodist hierarchy has raised up and sent forth, and is now employing such a force of sappers and miners?

Follow these men in their work, note the wiles and arts and false pretences with which they first invade a prosperous and happy church. See how at this point they bring to bear all the cunning which Wesley copied out of the books and practices of the Jesuits, and all the Jesuit that was naturally in him, and all that has accumulated in the lines of tradition from him, in the experience of his successors. Follow them in their modes of assault, all as accurately developed in the treasures of the science of Methodist tactics, as in the mode of conducting a siege and defence

in military science. See them now investing a place, by hanging upon its borders, now besieging, now taking by storm, and now by stratagem, as the case requires; and after their victory follow on to the result. See first the original church crippled or ruined; the Methodist body is full and flush for a while, shouts of victory and glory make the welkin ring; but soon the tide has an ebb; the object is accomplished upon the old church, and the new has no more a sufficient stimulus to life and effort. Decline ensues, and the people, whose breasts had been inflamed with this false zeal,—where are they now? They have conceived a fixed and settled disgust at all religion, and are found in the ranks of Universalists, scoffers, or home heathen. The law of the Sabbath is abrogated, and every vice and immorality goes forth unchecked. Now is it no concern of the people that their sacred interests are invaded by an army so trained and so employed? and that the scouts and detachments from this army are stationed in every town and village?

CHAPTER III.

METHODISM A CHURCH AND NO CHURCH. — DECREASE OF
METHODISM. — METHODIST LIBERTY. — CAMP MEETING.

METHODISM does not unequivocally profess to be a church of Christ, and under a carefully sustained equivocation, about this much of its wrong finds shelter.

I have already shown that Mr. Wesley claimed to do many things *in his Societies* for spiritual improvement, which would not be lawful to do *in the administration of a church*, with ordinances under Christ; that in his own societies, or in his own house, he was conceded to have a rule, such as he might not have in Christ's house. Now throughout the whole working of the system there is a playing at fast and loose, between the church and no church. Methodist Societies are churches when it is convenient to assume that name for them, and they are only societies for mutual improvement, when the task is to indicate man's claims to usurpation in them. And the Book of Discipline is most cunningly framed to

sustain this equivocation. And it is well to look at this carefully, because it will be found to be the spring of an immense amount of duplicity, seen in the common developments of Methodist character.

Other books of discipline or church constitutions lay their basis on a clear definition of a church. This does nothing of the kind.

In the Articles of Faith, printed in the same book with this, may be found a very proper definition of the church. But in the Discipline there is no use of it in the constitution of the church. Instead of it, is the artfully drawn history, given by Wesley, of the origin, not of the church, *but of his Society*, and his Society is the body constituted in the Book of Discipline. And being constituted, it is used as a substitute for the church. The history is given as follows:

“ In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to Mr. Wesley in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that he would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work, he appointed a day when they might

all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and to as many more as desired to join with them, (for their numbers daily increased) he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them. And they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.

"This was the rise of the *United Society*, first in Europe, and then in America. Such a society is no other than a company of men, having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.

"That it may be more easily discerned, whether they are working out their salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in a class, one of whom is styled a *Leader*," &c., &c.

The above history we have in the place of the definition of a church. It artfully avoids what are the essential points in the definition of all the evangelical churches. It avoids making the church to consist of a body of the apparently regenerated people of God. It makes its societies to consist of those desirous to flee from the wrath to come. So, if an inconsistency is urged, and

if it be alleged that Methodists make the Christian church to consist of others than those who profess to be Christians, their answer is ready. These, forsooth, are only *societies* for those who desire to flee from the wrath to come, and surely there is no harm in bringing such persons into societies for advice and prayer and the word of exhortation. And yet as Methodism knows no church but these societies, and as she administers Christian ordinances in these societies, she does knowingly and intentionally admit unconverted men into the church. Wonder is often expressed by evangelical Christians, that such and such persons, not pretending to have been really converted to God, should have been received into the Methodist church. It is not understood that the Methodist book provides for doing just this thing, under the form of giving advice to those who would flee from the wrath to come. It offers to the postulant for admission, a society for advice and prayer, and after he is admitted, he finds himself in a church with ordinances and sacraments. The book avoids connecting ordinances with its structure of a church. So as not to bring in Christ to rule in the church, and curtail the rule of Wesley there.

The church is not allowed to appear in the act

of forming a church. Most other denominations make something of the matter of organizing a church. But the Methodists never do. Their church, such as it is, glides in; it comes not with observation. Here are three or four persons in a place where there are no other Methodists, who wish to join in a Methodist class. Their names are put in a book, and one of their number is named Class Leader; and then a church is formed, as much as a Methodist church ever is formed. Nor is it essential that these persons profess to be Christians; for this is not a necessary condition of joining a class. The church comes in so invisibly, that it may not seem to be a church, nor claim the rule of Christ.

If this society were Christ's house, the ruling voice of Christ would be heard in it, and the man ruler would be put to silence, or put in the position of an under shepherd. So to avoid this necessity, this would-be church is fitted up with all the appliances and claims of a church, and supplied with church ordinances, and then called a "UNITED SOCIETY," to screen it from the charge of doing in the church what Christ has forbidden to be done there, as for instance, "lording it over God's heritage," and to save the appearance of bringing in unregenerate members

into the church. Methodists make their church only a prayer-meeting — “United to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and watch over one another.” And surely there is no harm in bringing the unregenerate to such a meeting. This name very nicely evades all the difficulty; it is only a society if need be, and it is a church if need. If you say Methodists of design admit unconverted members to the church, you err: for it is only a society which they admitted him to. If you accuse any of despotic power in the church, you err: for it is only a society in which this power is used. So that one begins his Methodist life in dodging and duplicity. And with Methodism nothing is mere theory; a principle of duplicity here lodges in the head of the system, goes down to the very fingers and toes, *a practical reality*. Here is the stem of that cluster of causes that has made Methodism another name for duplicity and deceit. The novice is introduced into a church whose platform is itself an equivocation. His mind in all its progress gradually and unconsciously frames itself to its equivocal position. All the administrations in the church, which go to form the minds of the members, must have the same play at fast and loose. If the church constitutions contem-

plate not a body of regenerate persons, but only those having a vague desire to flee from the wrath to come, the church administrations must correspond. The preaching, the prayers, and all the forms of instruction and intercommunication in the church, will sustain the indefiniteness originating in the platform.

And here, doubtless, is one source of that levity of speech and practice which prevails among Methodists as to a connection with a church, and in the easy process of passing in and out of church. The truth is, the very idea of a church in minds formed after the Methodist theory is belittled and degraded. In such minds it has not the sacredness of the body of Christ; it is not the church of the living God, — the pillar and ground of the truth; but is a “United Society” for prayer and exhortation. Hence, it is so light a matter to pass in and out of the church; hence the levity with which the matter of conversion, — the grand condition of eternal life, — is spoken of. Take a specimen of this: a young man of excellent character from one of our Northern cities, being in one of the Middle States, at a time and place where a revival was in progress among the Methodists, a prominent member of the church invited him to go down one evening to their

meeting, and told him, that if he would, they "WOULD PUT HIM THROUGH," i. e., convert him.

Any one moderately conversant with Methodists, and observant of their forms of speech, must have remembered many instances of a like levity touching the most sacred things. It is a general characteristic of the body, and it is easy to trace it to its causes.

The playing fast and loose here begun in the church constitution, extends through all church action, and, as we shall see, it has affected even the statistics of the church.

DECREASE OF METHODISM.

When a cultivator of the soil would ascertain whether the products of his fields diminish or increase from year to year, he ascertains what his farm produces *by the acre*, and not what products he gets by bringing new acres under cultivation. If the products of his old field fall off one-quarter or one-eighth in each year, and he makes up the deficiency by buying more land, or putting more under cultivation, he naturally concludes that he is exhausting the soil, and that, under his culture, the products of his fields are diminishing. This method of estimating products should be applied when we examine the question of the increase or

decrease of Methodism. If we find that in the longest cultivated fields the products are diminishing, while the deficiency, in whole or in part, is made good by adding new fields to be cultivated, then we say that under that cultivation the soil is undergoing an exhaustion, and the products are diminishing. This just mode of estimation must be followed if we would reach a just conclusion as to the question whether Methodism is increasing or decreasing, for no one questions its power to burn over new land, and sow its seed on a virgin soil; but the great misgiving had about it is, whether its influence on a place for a long course of years is good and lasting, or whether the fields, after its occupation, do not become more productive of briars and thorns than of good fruit.

There is another preliminary remark needful here. Methodism is a slippery material to handle with ordinary instruments. That *equivocation* which is seated in the structure of its church constitution appears in all the branches of its theory and practice, and it runs into the mathematics of its statistical tables. In the minutes of the Conference all seems clear to the uninitiated. For the course of years, down to 1848, the minutes report so many church-members, or "*persons in*

society," as the idiomatic phrase is. After that, the minutes report both church-members and probationers, but in separate columns. The showing plainly is, that, in the previous years, probationers are not reported at all, and that the proper way to compare the present numbers with the past would be to compare what are put down as church-members now with what were put down as church-members then. But Mr. Wise here attempts an escape by one of the loop-holes which his system provides. He says those former minutes really included probationers, though the books say nothing about probationers; that is, the Methodist ministry sustained for so many years the palpable deception of declaring that they had so many thousands more members of the church than they really had. We are unwilling to believe this involved charge of deception as implicating the whole denomination on Mr. Wise's testimony; and yet, where so much lubricity has been shown to exist, we cannot trust ourselves in relying on either position by itself. We must adjust our statement to both hypotheses.

Let the reader here remark what end is subserved by the cherished ambiguity about the number "in society," that term being made so elastic as now to include and then to exclude proba-

tioners, according to convenience. It is often objected against Methodism that it receives members into society, meaning the church, in haste, and without even a pretence of conversion. To this it is replied: "These are not church-members; they are only probationers, or members of the classes." Being simple enough to believe from this, that Methodism distinguishes between probationers and church-members, when we look to the minutes and see so many names reported as members "in society," with nothing said about classes or probationers, we, in good faith, put them down as church-members, to be compared with church-members reported in other years; and now, lo and behold, all the probationers are said to be included with the members in society, and we are said to do them great injustice if we fail to take into account as members those before declared not to be members. This is the shuffling, not so much of the men as of the system itself, growing necessarily out of the Jesuitical equivocations of the system; but it shall not escape scrutiny by such means. We will meet it on either tack. We will first survey the growth or diminution of its products on the supposition that the numbers reported in 1843 are, as they appear in the reports, veritable church-members.

Mr. Wise complains that we have taken 1843 as the point of comparison, for, he tells us, that was the year in which Methodism reaped such a harvest from Millerism. That did not occur to us. We thank him for reminding us of one of the most striking illustrations of Methodist corruption, which we will bring to account elsewhere; but we do Methodism no injury by fixing on this point, for the converts were acknowledged and received as Methodist converts, and not accredited to Mr. Miller, and the minutes show that they were as well as other Methodist converts. The decrease in the subsequent year was only about in the usual proportion to the increase the year before. There are constant variations of increase and decline in the minutes; and the only way to a satisfactory result is to take in a long course of years.

We now begin the comparison with Lynn, the homestead of Methodism. Lynn, since 1843, has nearly doubled its population. At that date it had sixty-eight Methodist members more than it has now. Lowell has increased rapidly in population, but it now has six Methodist members less than it had then. Boston, notwithstanding its vast increase, has eighty-three less. Salem has ninety-six less. Worcester has twenty-seven less.

Newburyport has sixty-eight less. Charlestown has only twenty-four more. Of Providence and New Bedford we have not the minutes of this year; but last year Providence had ninety-eight less, and New Bedford twenty-eight more. It is in these cities especially that Massachusetts and New England have had what increase of population they have had. Many of the smaller towns have fallen off; yet in these towns, where most of the increase of people has been, there was, in the last twelve years, a decrease of Methodists.

Having seen how it has been in these cities, let us now take the round of the Eastern Conferences. The New England Conference embraces Massachusetts, except the south part and Cape Cod. This, in 1843, had 16,031 members, and now it has 14,211; that is a loss of 1,820 in twelve years, or about 150 a year.

The Maine Conference, in 1843, had 27,040, and in 1854, the two Conferences into which it has been divided, had a joint total of 17,819, which is a loss of 9,581.

The Providence Conference, embracing the south part of this State, the whole of Rhode Island and the east part of Connecticut, had, in 1843, a total of 15,221; in 1854 it had 13,430, a loss of 1,791.

The New York Conference, embracing the city, the margins of North River, the west part of Connecticut, and Long Island, in 1843 had 50,661; and the two Conferences made out of this, in 1854, had 45,706, a loss of 4,955.

The Troy Conference embraces north-eastern New York and the contiguous parts of Vermont; in 1843 it had 38,708; in 1854 it had 23,432, a loss of 15,276.

The Vermont Conference is found on the minutes first in 1845. It appears to have been set off from the New Hampshire Conference. In 1845 it had 9,076; in 1854 it had 6,590, a loss of 2,486.

The New Hampshire Conference, in 1843, had 25,717; in 1854 it had a total of 9,352, a loss of 16,365. A part of this loss came of the setting off of a part of the districts to make the Vermont Conference; but, adding in what was set off, the united loss of the two is 9,775.

Thus we have surveyed the whole of New England and Eastern New York, and in each and every Conference we find surprising loss. We take the sum of these losses, and find it to be 43,198; that is nearly one-third of the whole. At that rate, the whole would die out in a little more than forty years.

And now how has it been with the whole body of the M. E. Church North? In 1843 the total membership of the Conferences, that came to the North branch in the rupture, was 731,123. In 1854 the total membership of the North branch was 679,282; but this embraces segments of Conferences in the Southern States of Kentucky, Missouri and Arkansas, which have since split off from the South, and have become attached to the North. These have a total of 7,735, leaving a total for the North of 671,547; so that the M. E. Church North, since 1843, has, instead of making any increase by nearly doubling its stations, made a loss of 59,576; that is one-twelfth of the whole.

Now, let us see what the account is if we consider the numbers set against 1843 as including probationers, and so have need to include probationers in the numbers for 1854, where they are set in separate columns. In 1843 the total number of the North branch was 731,123; and in 1854, 783,355, showing in the whole field, for the eleven years, a gain of 52,232 on these columns, inflated by the addition of a hundred thousand probationers, a great portion of whom can never be members of the church.

Now, let us follow this mode of reckoning

round the Eastern Conferences, as we did the other. In 1843 the New England Conference had 16,031 members; last year it had 16,013; that is eighteen less. In 1843 the Maine Conference had 27,040; last year the two Maine Conferences had 21,334; that is a loss of 5,706. The Providence Conference in 1843 had 15,221; last year it had 15,231, an increase of ten. The New York Conference in 1843 had 50,661; last year the two New York Conferences had 52,595, an increase of 1,934. The Troy Conference in 1843 had 38,708; last year it had 27,073; that is a loss of 11,635. The New Hampshire Conference in 1843 had 27,717; the last year the New Hampshire and Vermont Conferences had 18,895, a loss of 9,822. The aggregate loss of these Eastern Conferences is 25,237. Thus conceding the most liberal mode of calculation, there has been, instead of this great gain that has been so much boasted, *an alarming loss!*

Now, if the whole body has not declined in proportion to these older portions of it, the reason is obvious. New fields have been added in the West, to supply deficiencies experienced at the East; and if, in the older Conferences, taken as whole bodies, it has not declined as fast as it declines in some localities, the reason is that new

fields are taken in, while some old ones are less productive, and many are wholly abandoned. Take, for instance, the New England, that is, the Massachusetts Conference. Making no account of the number of stations abandoned, we find they stand thus: In 1843 the number of travelling preachers—which indicates the number of stations occupied—was ninety-eight; in 1854 the number was one hundred and thirty-one; that is an increase of thirty-three; that is, Massachusetts Methodism, connected with this Conference, has, in the eleven years, added to it the fields for thirty-three more preachers, and shows a membership of eighteen less; so that, compared with the ground under culture, the product stands more than one-third less. But this is not all. The towns in Massachusetts where the most of Methodism exists have had a large increase of population; so that, in this view, also, the field has greatly increased, while the products have diminished. So the Troy Conference, while it has lost more than eleven thousand members, has added to its fields the stations of twenty-one ministers. A result essentially like this may be found generally pervading the older States; and amends are made, in part, by taking in new fields. So we see to what point the aggressive character of

Methodism tends. It is a contest for new fields to be given over to desolation. It is a contest to spread over the greatest possible number of people the pestilence of a spurious conversion, which conducts its victims to irreligion and infidelity.

What especially keeps the ship from a speedy sinking is the addition of the new States at the West to the domains of Methodism. Losses of numbers made in the East, are supplied, as far as possible, by numbers gained in new fields at the West.

The extent of the additions of territory made, both East and West, in the eleven years, may be indicated by a comparison of the number of travelling preachers. In 1843 the number was 3,160; in 1854 it was 4,814; that is an addition of 1,654. Thus, while Methodism has added a breadth of one third to its farm, it has but a trifle more than held its own in the amount of its products. So, on a true estimate of even these inflated numbers, it is fair to say that Methodism, compared with its ground under cultivation, has fallen off one-third in eleven years; that is, it has in its older fields one-third less of strength than it had eleven years ago.

Take another view. Since 1849 the minutes contain reports of probationers, distinct from

others. These give the numbers that were members on trial at the end of the Conference year. But the term of trial is six months. So that the minutes only report half that come in on trial during the year. It is true, that in rare cases some are kept on trial more than six months, and others less; but as one class may balance the other, we may get near to the number received on trial, in each year, by doubling the number reported at the end of the year. We have found the sums reported for the six years, in the whole body, to be 558,416. This doubled would produce 1,116,832. Now look at this. More than a million of probationers have been added to the Methodist body in six years, and in the end of eleven years it has gained only 52,232. Now if six years produce 1,000,000 of probationers, eleven years will produce 1,800,000. But to bring it within bounds, we will say, that here have been only a million and a half of probationers added in these eleven years. While this million and a half has been added, the net gain is only 52,232, that is, about one thirtieth of the whole number of probationers. Now if the church has made a net gain of only one in thirty, which has been added in that time, after making all reasonable allowances for losses by death, she must have lost

by backsliding more than nine tenths. Here is a mathematical demonstration, that the proportion lost by spurious conversions is greater than I had named.

This result is truly appalling. Methodism has added one third to the number of its stations in eleven years. Of course the produce now standing in its fields is, *by the acre*, only two thirds of what it was; that is, in a proper estimate, Methodism has declined one third in eleven years. Nor has its loss come of any general religious declension. Evangelical churches generally are no less thrifty than they were; and most of them have to a very encouraging extent kept pace with the population. The population of the country has been swelling out westward, like the rush of waves upon a rising tide; and other denominations have kept pace with it; but Methodism, declining at its heart, has been extending its arms with a desperate grasp westward, and into all new fields, to supply its loss.

The patient, by an instinct of nature, tries to conceal the consumption from himself and others. While wasting away, he reports himself every year of having become more corpulent, and having made a great advance upon the past. Indeed, he makes this pretence of increase a salve for

every sore. The slight wound caused by my book was the occasion of abundant applications of this remedy. The Methodist press, from Lynn to New Orleans, has been in agitation for six months, and the shakes are still continued. The most remarkable feature of their issues has been a ceaseless strain of boasting of "the peerless advance of Methodism!" Writers in the papers have dreamed dreams and seen visions of this; and whether it were of argument, prophecy or poetry, the burden has been the resistless, onward march of Methodism. But the aid of the press was not sufficient. A grand council of the ministry and fraternity was recently gathered in Boston, to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of Boston Methodism and the astonishing growth of the whole body. The bellows of that meeting was inflated to the utmost to blow me away with one desperate puff of Methodist increase. The shots came thick and fast upon my unworthy book and more unworthy self. It was one grand jubilee. The *elite* of the Methodist ministry put forth their choicest powers; and Zion's Herald closes its report of it by an expression of approbation, saying of the meeting, that "it was happily conceived and well attended, and will bring honor on the church of Christ." Of course it was just that

exhibition of the spirit of Methodism which the organ of the body approves, and by which Methodism is wont to honor Christ. I need not go into details of what was said and done, for all have gone forth in the papers. I should, however, preserve some memory of the closing exercise — I will not say doxology — by the Rev. and Hon. Mark Trafton. For such a great occasion, the Moses and Aaron, the lawgiver and the divine, became also the sweet singer of Israel, and produced an additional gem to the Methodist sacred lyrics, a specimen of which we have in the following stanza :

“ A jolly fat parson looked out one day,
 And he saw a new chapel just over the way,
 So he rubbed his dull eyes, and said he :
 What is that stands before me without lifting its hat ?
 And he filled his huge cheeks to blow it down flat ;
 For this Parsons C. the bishop would be
 Of the Cordwainer’s City that ’s washed by the sea.”

The poem then goes on to represent that “ Parsons C.” was so bent on raising a storm to blow away the good ship of Methodism, that his own dug-out was carried out to sea :

“ And sure as the Conflict of Ages is true,
 This parson himself may turn up all new
 And cry ‘ Ship ahoy !’
 Fling a poor fellow a rope, old boy,
 And Parsons C. may yet rise to be
 A *Cook* in the Methodist ship, you see !”

Zion's Herald calls for the publication of the whole hymn, "that Parsons Cooke may have the benefit of being puffed to his entire satisfaction." Amen. Surely this sacred psalm, celebrating an occasion so sacred in strains so consonant with it, should not be suffered to die. If it could come into some edition of camp meeting melodies, it might go "puffing" on to immortality.

And yet these people are not excited when they say and do such things ; and when their papers groan with so many and so painful abortions. For the great writer for this subject, in the great organ at New York, says :

But with all the baying of this furious zealot against the Methodists, so far as I have observed, *they* are generally

"Calm as summer evenings be."

But we have digressed. One of the remarkable of this meeting, next to singing the tune of Trafton, was the boast of Methodist increase, put forth by Rev. James Porter, of Boston. This was *the* speech of the occasion, as the other was *the* song. To him was specially assigned the duty of *trumpeter*, of the vast increase of Methodism. He stated, according the Traveller's report, that the net increase of the last year has been 30,000,

and that the present number is 783,358. Now it so happens that the minutes of 1854 present just this number. Hence we conclude there must have been a mistake of the reporter. Either he spoke according to the minutes of 1854, or else there has been no increase at all since that time ; if he did, he told us nothing of the increase of the last year. This is the only year of which I have not in hand the minutes of all the Conferences. And his figures show that he is no better supplied with minutes than I am, and his facts do not conflict an iota with the conclusion which I have above established from the minutes. And how solid a basis for boasting that affords, the reader has seen.

But the decline of Methodism is not confined to this country. The English correspondent of the Congregationalist, whose letter from England appeared in that paper of September 14, 1855, tells us how it is with the Wesleyan body in England, which are by far the better half of Methodism. Speaking of the sessions of the Conference recently closed, he says :

“ The present position of this still powerful body is fitted to excite the apprehension of its best friends — if, that is, they could but divest themselves of that foolish partiality which refuses

to see the truth. It is certainly, as every dispassionate looker-on can see, a position which those without, who wish well to this once prosperous and progressive evangelical movement, cannot look upon without regret; regret, not for the sake of *Methodism* — the sooner that is merged in higher sentiment the better — but for the 'general cause' sake. From the first, the policy of the Conference in dealing with the reactionary (or as they are fond of calling it, *revolutionary*) movement was rather one of expulsion than conciliation; and this policy has cost the society no less, at the least, it is said, than 100,000 members in this country alone. A further decrease is reported this year of 3000 members. This loss of members represents, of course, proportionately diminished pecuniary resources; for, after all, let the wealthy give as liberally as they may, it is the steady and regular contributions of numbers, small as the individual offering may be, that constitutes the chief sinew of fiscal strength to the Methodist community. The departments in which financial depression has been most felt, and the quarters in which it tells most severely, are just those where one would least like to see it fall, viz., on those affecting chiefly and directly the ministers of the body. Many of the ministers are placed in this painful position: the supplies furnished by the circuits, which are at the disposal of the circuits respectively, are lessened in amount necessarily by the numerous expulsions and withdrawals which have taken

place, so that official support is affected at its sources ; then the contingent fund, which should be available for the assistance of the weaker circuits, is unable to bear further pressure for the present. On the other hand, but telling in the same direction, other connectional funds — those for the support of the schools, for instance, to which the ministers are rated at a certain contribution yearly in consideration of personal interest in their benefits — are so circumstanced as to necessitate enlarged contributions, and this just when the means of meeting the old rate of payment are diminished. Then with regard to the general position and prospects of the body, it seems that the aggregate number of ministers is not greater now, notwithstanding the immense increase of population, than it was ten years ago, and notwithstanding that the loss to the society every year by death, superannuation, and other causes, amounts to an average of more than forty. This year — a serious fact for the thick-and-thin sticklers for English Methodism — the proposal was seriously made to diminish the number of the stated ministers, and to relinquish some of the ground already occupied. The loss to the Methodist ministry this year, from death and various other causes, is forty-three. It is a fact to be thankful for, that only one out of this aggregate of losses is due to immorality of conduct. The number of candidates for the ministry now received exactly equals last year's loss ; but even this increase to the ranks of the existing ministry

— only just sufficient to maintain the numbers of last year — was objected to on the ground that stations and subsistence could not be adequately found for those already admitted. The considerations which were allowed to overrule the objection, were that thirty out of the forty-three candidates would give themselves for missionary service, for which they would soon be required, and that unless they were received, the two theological institutions, with a staff of three tutors to each, the only institutions for training their ministry which the Methodists sustain, would presently be reduced to the miserable complement of only seven students between them. The peculiar and almost characteristic feature of primitive Methodism was its Home Missionary Agency. So singularly are matters changed with them by the course of time, that notwithstanding the retention of an itinerant ministry, and notwithstanding the round of circuit labors each preacher has to undertake, it is felt that something distinctive in the way of home missionary effort is needed. Nothing definite appears to have been done in the matter beyond the introduction of it to the notice of Conference. The times are evidently serious for the prospects of this once prosperous and successful body, and yet there seems to be as little disposition as ever to modify and temper its ancient spirit in the least iota to meet the demands of the time."

It may be said that this decline of English

Methodism came of a particular disaster; but that disaster was the natural result of its own constitution—a necessary fruit of Methodism restraining human liberty beyond the point of endurance. That disaster occurred years ago, and yet the decline then begun has not been arrested. There has been a decided loss this year. Methodism grew up, as its friends tell us, under the hand of Providence, as all other mixtures of good and evil have; and now it seems clear that Providence is about to finish his work with it. Both here and in England His hand is evidently upon it to arrest its course.

Now, when we come to compare the current representations made by these men with the facts, we hardly know in what terms we ought to speak. Methodists well know what gain they have made by a false impression of increase so constantly and loudly put forth. Their boasted success has been their great argument to meet all objections—a most fallacious argument, even if it had a basis of fact. For the great success which the Romish corruption had, when it overrun the Christian world, did not prove it to be a true religion. Formerly Methodism *had* great success; but it was no more true then, than it is now, while it is declining. It, like Jonah's gourd, came up in a

night, and it will perish in a night. But till now its abettors have contrived to keep the whole community under the impression that they were going forward to the absorbing of all, with a resistless march. They have not badly copied the stratagem of Gideon. The lamps and the broken pitchers have made a glare and a noise with which the few have frightened the many.

If any suggestions have been made, that all is not right with Methodism, the answer has been — “See how we increase; see what life, energy and thrift are in the system; see how the blessing of God attends it.” This argument, false in fact and false in inference, has taken by storm many a superficial mind. Now, I wish to lodge the appeal with the honest men that yet remain with Methodism, whether this course of things, by which Methodism now has what life it has, is to be encouraged by them. Your ministers know how the facts are: they made the minutes from which I have drawn my information. And where they speak these great swelling words of vanity, they well know how far they are from the truth. And yet for a long course of years, somebody has kept up a stupendous deception! Now, are the men that sustain this delusion in a matter of fact, worthy of public confidence, as preachers of the

gospel of Christ? Is the cause, that is bolstered up by such a falsification of facts, the cause of truth and the cause of Christ? If arguments were wanting to prove Methodism to be a corrupt corporation, would not the fact that it lives and thrives by a falsehood, laboriously and carefully nursed, suffice?

But, aside from the false pretences of growth, something is to be learned from the fact, that Methodism so manifestly *loses ground on all its other fields*. As success in a given case cannot prove the genuineness of any form of religion, so the want of success in particular instances, cannot prove it spurious. Yet, if this is the general course of events with Methodism, that it comes in and works with success among a people while it is new; and then exhausts the soil, and dies out, and that from no change in the doctrines held forth, and no cessation of the appliances by which it had its first success, it evidently does not carry with it the life and power of the gospel of Christ. But let the *inference* be what it may, there is no escape from the *fact*, that Methodism, in all its older fields, is gradually losing its hold on the people.

Then here is another fearful fact, that the probationers bear such a proportion to the members

of the church, that out of a million of persons encouraged to believe themselves converted under Methodist auspices in six years, all but the smallest remnant are soon found to be backslidden, and so many of them set in the ranks of irreligion and infidelity. Here is a work of wholesale ruin; and those who participate in it, or at least the system that produces it, stand responsible for it. The fields which it burns over are left to desolation. Those millions of persons deceived, are set very much without the range of gospel influence. In the strifes which have been kindled by Methodists coming in, and breaking down other churches to build up their own, and then the delusions played off on the spurious converts, and the disgusts at religion, generated by such antics as Methodism exhibits, leave the fields which it had overrun, as if they had been swept by fires. And heathenism presents a more hopeful ground for the missions, than the places which Methodism has laid waste.

I wish the reader to look simply at the fact, that Methodism, in every few years, takes under her wing, and then throws out as refuse material, a million of spurious converts—a million of immortal minds. Let these converts be followed in their after history, into the irreligion and infidelity

so naturally ensuing upon their discovered deception, and thence get the arithmetic of the wreck and ruin produced by the revolutions of this immense machinery. The turning out of infidels by millions is no trifle. The great hindrance to the progress of religion in all our communities is, that there is so large a portion of the people who have drawn off from all the appliances of Christianity, and fortified themselves against them. Our sabbaths, our gospel ministry, our individual Christian efforts, the issues of our religious press, all are to them as though they did not exist; and as if this were not enough, we have a nominally Christian sect, boasting of the largest wealth and numbers, that is working a broad machinery, to multiply just this class of people by millions. Do not the interests of the common Christianity then require that we shall review our opinions of the influence of this sect, and at least cease to aid it in its ruinous work?

METHODIST LIBERTY.

Liberty is the material with which Methodist proselyters bait their hook to catch the simple. Methodists, forsooth, are so much more free and loving; there is so much freedom in their meetings, and in their intercourse, that their society is

a little heaven upon earth. These are chief among the inducements held out for others to join them. And here is another instance of the tendency of men to boast themselves most in qualities of which they are the most destitute. By some strange misnomer, it is represented, that that sect, which of all Protestant sects is most completely under bondage, tied hand and foot, has the most liberty. This answers exactly to the description of false teachers given by the apostle Peter, when he said, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption." That is, the slaves to the worst of masters are wont to make large promises of liberty.

Let us glance at the nature of the liberty promised, and then at the bondage endured. Let any one, conversant with Methodist operations, bear in mind what he has seen and heard in this line, and he will find that the things promised are mainly liberties taken with the truths and ordinances of God, and the restrictions imposed come of the ordinances of man. Methodism unbinds what God has bound, and lays fetters on men, where he has not bound, and where he bids them stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free. One prominent feature of

the promised liberty is, the liberty of woman usurping authority over the man, and teaching in the church.

Mr. Wise tell us that Methodism does not allow females in preaching or public speaking. But there need be no dispute about that. What is allowed in common practice, is known to all, and what in theory is allowed, is of less consequence. In theory, the Book of Discipline allows none to exhort but licensed exhorters; and females are not licensed to exhort. But it allows all, male and female, *to express their desires*. But when a woman commences her speech in an assembly, it would be no easy matter to hold her to the distinction between expressing desires, and expressing something else. The outpourings freely indulged on such occasions, are not usually very coherent; and the presiding officer would find it no easy task to tell what does and what does not come under the rule. The spirit of inspiration has forbidden female public speaking, not so much because there are not females that are competent to give instruction, as because those who are competent, have usually too much good sense to be willing to violate the instincts of their nature, and the proprieties of their position, by engaging in such speaking.

And the result is, that those who are willing to engage in it, are not usually overstocked with judgment and discretion. They are not aware of the infelicities of their position and performance. They seem not to be aware that their treble pipes are too delicate for the hard labor of public speaking, and that the effect is anything but happy on the hearer. They seem not to be aware that in the act of public speaking, the adorning of "shamefacedness" is laid aside, that the modesty in which the finish and polish of woman consist, is thrown off, and violence is done to all that is delicate in female nature. Then the female, speaking under a fancy of compulsion by the Spirit of God, is driven to an agitation of the nervous system, and an exhaustion of the lungs, which sometimes results in incoherent whining and screeching and sobbing. This exposes religion to be made a subject of ridicule, and profane jesting by the spectators, which these violations of the obvious proprieties of life are sure to attract. Yet these women feel that they are impelled by the Holy Ghost, and that God is responsible for all the evils that ensue. They come into a way to lose the sensitive modesty which is the jewel of the sex, and to defy control, and become censorious and conceited or aspiring to rule in the

church. Nor are there wanting the weaker brethren, who encourage them in taking to them the airs of a prophet, and regard their ravings as the utterances of an oracle ; and the liberty of these violations of the word of God is a much valued liberty in Methodist practice. This public exhibition of an indecency, is as attractive to the vulgar gaze, as any other ; and its operation on course minds is powerful to draw in hearers : and the liberty of seeing such exhibitions is like the liberty of seeing any other shows or montrosities. And when the proselyters promise the liberty of doing and seeing such things, they hold forth a bait that is eagerly caught by many a simple one.

And generally, freedom from the restraints of decorum in places of worship, is one branch of Methodist liberty, — the liberty of speakers to mingle the ludicrous with the serious, and the liberty of hearers to interrupt with all sorts of ejaculations — whether of wit or devotion — the liberty of any number to speak and pray together with loud voices, renewing the confusion of Babel. Methodism has been analyzed to very little effect, by those who have failed to see what importance it attaches to an element in which it appeals to men's love of amusement and sport. To many

minds the mixture of religion and fun, like the mixture of acids and sweets, gives to each a zest which it separately could not have. For a long course of years, the Sabbath evening exercise connected with one of the Methodist churches in Lynn, was the great place of resort of young people of both sexes, for amusement. There was something in the way in which the exercises were conducted, that attracted the idle ones. And finally, as we were informed, the love of amusement so preponderated, as to make it expedient to close the house on Sabbath evenings. The camp meeting is also an expedient to gratify the desire of many, to mingle mirth with devotional scenes. Here is the joint where the camp meeting system springs forth from the stock of Methodism. Some love the camp meeting for its devotional scenes, spread out amid so much that is romantic ; others love it for the amusement had in so much that is grotesque in sights and sounds ; others, for the mingling of the serious and the ludicrous. And then a multitude of camp followers, not Methodists, make it a glorious occasion of riot and frolic. And the presence of these is not repelled by Methodists, because they expect that those who come to scoff, will remain to pray. In short, one important element of the power which

Methodism exerts for good or harm, is the power of making its religious scenes attractive to the irreligious, by an artful combining of fun and irreligion in them; and turning the house of God to a Babel, when the occasion invites — contrary to the word of God, which requires all things in his worship to be done decently and in order — to be done with reverence and godly fear. By such unwarrantable attractions held out by Methodism, serious minds are repelled, and the thoughtless are drawn in. This is one reason of that levity of character which so much abounds among Methodists.

Another attribute of Methodist liberty is the ease with which persons who desire it, find admission to the church. We have shown, that there is in the very structure of the Methodist church an equivocation, which saves the necessity of treating the church and its ordinances as of divine constitution. One really enters the church when he scarcely knows that he has entered it. He is invited to have his name entered on the class book, and that act makes him a member of the church and admits him to its ordinances, and if nothing in his character afterwards forbids, he is, to all intents and purposes, a member by that act, whatever ceremonies may or may not take place

afterwards. He is brought, in his admission to the church, to no solemn scrutiny touching the question of his regeneration, and is held to no act which holds him to a consciousness of covenanting with God. The mere giving his name to be put on the class paper, when he is perhaps told that that act means little or nothing, constitutes his membership of the church. And if he says that he is not ready to become a member now, he is told that it is not joining the church. It is only entering the class to be helped forward in spiritual life — if he changes his mind, it will all amount to nothing. This liberty too is a violation of the spirit of the word of God, which makes the act of covenanting with God the most solemn act of one's life. Yet by many minds that have not come under the power of godliness, this liberty of putting on and off its forms so easily, is fully appreciated.

Another form of Methodist liberty comes of laxness of discipline in the church. The practices which we formerly brought under notice, bring a large proportion of unconverted persons into the church. Most of the professed conversions are spurious. And in a church made up of such materials there is little of vital godliness. There is an abundance of talk about sanctification, and

an abundance of shouting of glory, but this conceals a vast amount of irreligion. A serious man, born and educated in Methodism, and for years connected with its ministry, remarked that there were some very pious people in the Methodist churches, but these were not the ones who made the most professions and noise — that when he saw one proclaiming his perfection, or one specially forward in relating remarkable experiences and shouting glory, he was very sure to find one of careless life, if not of scandalous morals. The churches made up of such materials can neither maintain nor endure wholesome discipline. Then we have seen what interest the minister has to keep as many as possible backsliders on his list of members, because his thrift for the next year depends on the numbers which he reports this year. Taking all these things into the account, there is great liberty in Methodist churches. The rules of Methodist discipline impose little restraint on the liberty of the members to retain their standing in the church with a careless life and lax morals. Hence it is, that when Methodism gains ascendancy in a place where strict morals before had prevailed, violations of the Sabbath begin to multiply under the ease and freedom of practice in church-members, touching

the sanctity of the Sabbath. This is another attribute of Methodist liberty.

Still another is the liberty of feeling that the law of God is so small a matter, that such sinners as we are may meet its full demand and render a perfect holiness in the present life. This is very comfortable to the mind that hates the holiness, purity and strictness of the law of God. This doctrine of perfection goes just to this result, to divest the mind of that sense of the purity of God's law, and the infinity of his claims on us, and of that overwhelming sense of sin, which is the only effectual prevention of sin. Hence it is so common to find those who profess to be perfect, to be men of really no religion at all, making good that word — If I should say I was perfect, that would prove me perverse. We can have no surer certificate of the rottenness of one's character. If otherwise he seems to be a Christian, that pretence shows that he is far from it.

The liberty of falling from grace is one of the liberties of Methodism. The feeling that regenerate character is such a light thing, that a man may lose it and regain it when he will; that is, that in falling from grace he has not so far to fall but that he may regain his position by one resolute rebound at any time, puts him much

at his ease. If a strong temptation assails, he is at liberty to yield; for if he falls, the fall may be easily retrieved. There are men within the range of our observation, who hold a connection with the Methodist church, who have regularly annual conversions at the camp meetings, and who for the rest of the year give themselves up to an unrestrained course of life, with a purpose of putting all right at the next camp meeting. And this is only an extreme example of a common use of the liberty of falling from grace. A well-known minister, while at the West, said to a Methodist: "After all, I must say that I don't like you Methodists." "Why," inquired the other, "do we not live up to your creed?" "Yes, you do; your creed is to fall from grace, and accordingly you fall." It is no wonder that these deluded people so abhor the doctrine that no regeneration is genuine, but that which endures to the end. No wonder that the liberty of falling from grace tempts so many into the ranks of Methodism.

Once more, the liberty of rejecting the binding authority of the word of God, is a part of the liberty of Methodism. It is a matter of common observation, and examples of it are given in other parts of this work, that where the plain

assertions of the doctrine of election in the Bible are quoted to Methodists, the reply often is — “I know it is taught in the Bible, but I will not believe it. I had rather believe Universalism.” It is taking liberty to unsay what God has said; and nothing is more frequent than the taking of such liberties with the Bible by Methodists.

Thus we have analyzed the peculiar liberty of Methodism. Of those who promise such a liberty, the Holy Ghost says: “For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are servants of corruption.”

But what shall we say of the fish that are caught by such baits? In the body of Methodism there are some that are born Methodists, and some that have come in from other causes. But those that have been drawn in by the greater liberty of Methodism, such as it is, such as the liberty of female speaking — the liberty of fun and confusion in the worship of God — the liberty of coming easily into the church — the liberty of an easy life and practice after getting in — the liberty of bringing God’s law down to the limits of a perfection attainable by man — the liberty of

falling from grace, and the liberty of setting aside the supreme authority of the Word of God, — I say that those who have been attracted to Methodism by the promise of such a liberty, and their name is legion, are undoubtedly “men of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith.”

Having seen what is that liberty which Methodism promises, let us see what bondage it imposes. The bondage under which the working clergy come to their superiors we have seen. To conceal this the suggestion is often made that Methodist ministers are peculiarly men of the people. A Methodist bishop preaching a dedication sermon in this vicinity a few months ago, gave special prominence to the idea, that Methodist ministers *were* “*of the people*.” They are of the people, in that they are born of mothers that make a part of the people. But as soon as they are set in the Methodist ministry, they are by every possible expedient put from and above the people. The Methodist system places its ministers beyond the influence and sympathy of the people as no other does except popery. Popery forbids marriage, and the rearing of families, that its ministers may not have a common interest and sympathy with the people. Methodism does the like by its itinerancy, which allows ministers to form no

abiding connections with any people. Still the idea has become a part of the very cant of Methodism, and yet what have the people to do in the appointment of their ministry? It is said that none can enter the travelling connection without the consent of the laity. And how is this? In order to admission to the Annual Conference, one must have a recommendation from the Quarterly Conference, which is said to represent the laity. And who are the Quarterly Conference? They are the travelling and local preachers, and the stewards and class leaders, appointed by the preachers, and under their control in every act. A pretty representation of the laity are these! And yet here is the only point where the laity touches the appointment of the ministry. When the Quarterly Conference has recommended one to the Annual Conference, they are under no shadow of obligation to receive him. And many so recommended are rejected. This shows to what extent these ministers are of the people in their origin. How they are over the people afterwards we have seen.

Look now at the condition of the Methodist people in relation to their ministry. The bishops hold unlimited power by the Annual Conferences, which are made up of travelling preachers only.

The managers of the Book Concern, the editors and the bishops, are chosen by the General Conference. Then all the presiding elders are appointed by the bishops, and the travelling preachers are appointed by vote of the travelling preachers. The Quarterly Conference pretends to have a lay element, which consists not of delegates from the people, but of travelling preachers, local preachers, stewards and class leaders, all of whom are appointed by travelling preachers, or by the Quarterly Conference in which the preachers bear rule and hold their office at their pleasure. The preacher also receives and dismisses church-members by his simple will — except when charges of immorality are brought, and then the accused is tried by a committee selected by him, who will of course execute his wishes if he has any. And if by chance they should give a verdict contrary to his mind, he can carry the matter to the Quarterly Conference and get it reversed. So there is no escape from his absolute power in the case.

None can officiate as exhorters but those who are licensed, not by the people, but by a power issuing from the ministry. The church has not the power to choose or dismiss its minister. For their meeting house, built with their money, or what they have begged from others, is held in trust

for the bishops, and the minister sent by the bishop must preach in it or it must be shut. No preacher can occupy the same place more than two years in succession. If he is wanted ever so much by the people, he may not stay; and if he is disliked, he must stay his appointed term. At the beginning of the year, the bishop appoints each his field, and if any changes are needed, there is on the ground a presiding elder, who for the purpose has a bishop in him. Hence there is an ubiquity of bishop power pressing on the people at every point. Preachers may select choristers, and must appoint class leaders. These class leaders must bring each member of his class to a quasi confessional, once a week, and then go as often to the minister and lay before him the knowledge which he has acquired and get new instructions from him. Through this network the central mind brings under control every mind. In every alternate week strangers may not be admitted to the class, for there are some things to be done in these classes, which it would be inconvenient to have known out of the class. And yet strangers are admitted at other times, that they may see how harmless a thing a class meeting is, being led to suppose they have seen all. The preacher is to visit each class as often as he has

occasion, and he is to keep himself in weekly contact with the steward, and by all means to know thoroughly all that is going on among his people ; and through them, by appointed system of espionage, he must thoroughly know what is going on among their neighbors. This has a double advantage : it makes the utmost strength of his people available for proselyting, and it keeps every mind well under subjection to himself. If the power and subordination of the Jesuit's system are more complete than this, I cannot see wherein. The minister goes forth under charge, to act, not as the minister of his own society, but to do good where he can ; which very liberal provision contains under it a duty of making it his especial care to gather lambs from others' flocks, which he is usually not loth to do.

The only crumb of liberty left to the people is the liberty of paying, or not paying the ministry. In some circumstances this liberty might be used to secure other liberties, but not here ; for the system is so framed and laid upon the people, that they must either give their minister sustenance, or have no minister. Let him be ever so offensive, and let him tyrannize ever so much, the meeting house for the time being is in his ; and the people must hear him or none ; and if he failed of getting his daily

bread, they could not hear him long. Besides, it were an ungracious business to withhold sustenance from one who is already on so short allowance. His very poverty is the rivet with which he locks the fetters of the people. So it has been in many instances under the Romish system.

Thus we see to what the glorious liberty, the much vaunted liberty of Methodism amounts. "They promise them liberty, while they themselves are servants of corruption."

MINISTRY AND EDUCATION.

After having seen how much there is that is undesirable both to a worldly and to a Christian mind in the Methodist itinerant ministry, the question forces itself upon us—How is it that so many are willing to enter it? In different individuals different causes have influence. Some have a real desire to preach the gospel, and enter the itinerancy with little forecast of the experience to be had in it. To others, it is a fancied elevation of their position, to pass from the workshop or farm to the pulpit. With others, the offices of bishop, of presiding elder, of editor, and professor, may be objects of ambition. Though every lottery has many blanks to one prize, yet the few prizes attract many adven-

turers ; and some are induced to enter the itinerancy by false promises held out by presiding elders. The young man demurs at the proposal of his duty to enter this ministry, on the ground that he can have no exercise of choice as to the field of his labor. The elder replies — “That is indeed our theory ; but then as a matter of practice, the thing is so managed, as very much to consult the wishes of the preachers.” And it may be he gives him definite promises as to his first appointment, but promises that are not fulfilled. A case of this kind recently occurred : A young man was preparing for the ministry in another denomination, and a presiding elder approached him and invited him to enter the itinerancy. He objected on several grounds, and one was that he could not choose his field of labor. The reply was, that “there would be no difficulty about that ; for he might select and know the place of his appointment before he was appointed.” Instances have occurred where presiding elders have made definite promises as to the first place of labor, to induce a young man to take an appointment, and then sent him to a field totally different from the one promised. Presiding elders are wont to approach this kind of young men with all the kindness and affection

of fathers—full of fair promises—which promises are so much wind, after the end is gained. For if a young man gets into the Conference, he must go where he is sent, or be broken down and disgraced. The little fish finds an easy passage up through a suction pump; but having passed above the valve, his return is not so easy. After the young men are fairly under the yoke of the elders and bishops, they are ruled with a rod of iron—except in the case of those who are admitted to form the wheel within the wheel, and evolve into the pleasant places. The others discover the hollowness of the promises when it is too late. Then they are found submitting to the “godly judgments” of the elders and bishops—with the penalty of ministerial death before their eyes.

But then why do so many remain, after experience of the crushing and deceitful character of the system? There are many that do not remain. Many, and those having more force of character, leave it, after a few years’ experience has taught them what it is. So while some of the leading minds advance on to the leading offices, others lead off into secular employments, through what is called locating, leaving the less efficient and less independent minds to sustain

the slavery. Many of these become disheartened, lose their self-reliance, and fear that they shall not succeed in any other course of life. Others have their spirits broken, their manliness crushed, and sink into mere passive tools of the hierarchy. And probably some remain from a sense of duty, heartily attached to the work of the ministry, and yet knowing no better way for its performance.

When a young man enters the Conference and exhibits special force of character, and promises to carry a great influence with the people, it is seen that danger lurks in him — danger to the central power, from such an independent spring of power in him. The first necessity then is to break him in — that is either to crush him, or to crush the spirit of independence within him. This was exemplified in the history of the late Dr. Bascom. Through the first six or seven years of his ministry his history was a tragedy. And the only cause of his sufferings was his superior talents and independence of character. It was foreseen that he would not be a pliant subject of despotic power. And his success as a preacher excited the envy of his superiors in office. Hence the struggle which he had for so many years; and hence the suffering under

which so many noble spirits have been crushed. He however conquered, and made it necessary for the hierarchy to concede him a position suitable for him and yet compatible with its safety.

A few years ago, a young man in one of the Middle States had evinced independence of mind and popular talents in the pulpit. But for the sin of having gained popular favor as a preacher, he was doomed. It was resolved in secret council, to send him away from all the large towns into a barren and forbidding field. And ever since he has been denied any desirable appointments. But his talents, which are of the first order, have been employed in raising money to pay off church debts, instead of preaching the gospel.

One reason why there is so much of passive obedience and non-resistance in the Methodist ministry is, that there is so small a proportion of thoroughly educated mind. Uneducated men make the best slaves and the hardest masters. Were the general impression correct, as to the advance of ministerial education in the Methodist body, we might hope for a speedy dissolution of the hierarchy from that source. The impression is, that the body as a whole are in earnest to secure a college education and an education at a

Theological Seminary, for the itinerant ministry. Here, too, Methodism presents a double face. There has been much talk and show of an educated ministry, because in these days the credit of the body requires as much. But when judged by their acts, it will be seen that the body, as a whole, do not desire it; and they have a good reason for not desiring it. For the attainment of it would revolutionize their system, dissolve their itinerancy and the power of their elders and bishops. The tendencies towards such a result in the agitations of which we have previously spoken—in the demand for a lengthened term of the minister's appointment, and a demand for a lay element in the councils, can, with the small sprinkling of educated men, now had, be kept within bounds by providing for the agitators places in office, or places in Siberia. But if the proportion of educated men should greatly advance, there would not be places enough in either region for them.

A striking confirmation of our views as to the Methodist itinerancy appears in the great organ of Methodism, the *New York Christian Advocate* of Sept. 10, from the pen of Dr. Foster, arguing for an extension of the time of a minister's continuance in a given place. One of his reasons is, that the present system prevents a compliance with

the indications of Providence, whatever they may be ; nay, at a certain point, absolutely prevents any regard thereto whatever, disallowing on the part of God any participation in the distribution of the pastors of his own church, and laborers of his own appointment.

This is precisely the objection which we stated, and it is fatal to the whole fabric of the hierarchy. Among other reasons against the present system he gives the following :

“It disheartens and drives away from the regular work of the ministry our best and greatest men.

“This is a notorious fact. The few men of mark, of distinguished talent, who appear from time to time among us, despite the disabilities of the system, either leave us entirely, or remain with broken spirit, or find their way into some by-post, where they escape the operation of a system which has become irksome and burdensome. Agencies, editorships, professorships, and such like, engross them. We say not this to their blame. In our judgment, they are not blameworthy. We drive them away as with goads. Scores of names, living and dead, will come up to every reader's mind at once. *It has come to be a fact, that there are as many candidates among us for outside places as there are considerable men, and a great many more.* The pastorship goes begging. Those remain in it

whose talents will not command a more desirable place.

“This is plain dealing; but it is what we all know to be true. Our pulpit cries out with distress on account of it in every city in this nation. And while it is driving our best minds out of the ranks, it must prevent others from entering. Young men of education and promise, who would be a blessing to our Zion, will be slow to enter upon a life so fraught with needless and injurious inconveniences. They will go to other pulpits, or, it may be, even against the holiest convictions, to secular pursuits. We may have the madness to shut our eyes against these things; but we cannot prevent the church from suffering most deeply on account of them. We must make more of our pastorship, or our cause must feel the neglect. Most grievous must be that mistake in any church, which brings the regular work of the ministry into such disabilities that the best and ablest men become eager to escape from it. We, I fear, have committed that mistake.”

It is not to be supposed that Dr. Foster here expresses the united opinion of the Methodist body. Another writer in the same paper, with the signature of Old Foggy, says :

“The doctor, after having said as hard things of our itinerant system as any man ever has, insinuates that there is something much worse,

which he does not dare to say. Hear him: 'The subject is too painful to be dwelt upon, and in shame we must draw a veil over some parts of it.' I have read that the children of Noah put a veil or covering over him when intoxicated, and I have read more recently of the "veiled murderess;" but I have yet to learn that the M. E. Church has been guilty of any crime requiring a veil to conceal her from public scrutiny."

Hence the present interests of the hierarchy are advanced by having much said and little done towards the education of the ministry. Now what has been actually done after thirty years' agitation for an educated ministry? We take it, that it will be conceded, that the proportion of graduates of colleges is as great in the travelling ministry of Massachusetts — which dwells chiefly in Boston and the other cities — as in any other place. The New England Conference may, in this respect, be called the Banner Conference. In that Conference of 133 active travelling preachers, only about *one in ten*, are graduates of any college. In all the Eastern States the Methodists have but one college, and but a small proportion of the students of that become Methodist ministers. If now and then a Methodist minister graduates at another college, it as often happens

that ministers of other denominations graduate from this.

But the leanness of the Methodist Theological Seminary at Concord best illustrates the mind of Methodism as to an educated ministry. Look first at the thing to be done, that is to the deficient state of education as it now is, and then at the working of the machinery for doing it. Methodist presiding elders are not usually men of a high order of intellect or education. They are often those who cannot well sustain themselves as preachers, but whose lack of preaching talent is made up in secular shrewdness. The generality of Methodist ministers possess only a common education, and some of them not even that. Yet while such a state of things exists, the encouragement which the work of ministerial education finds from Methodism is equivocal. The fact that the men liberally educated rarely make genuine Methodist preachers, and have no occasion to love, but many reasons to abhor the itinerancy, makes its impression on the whole business. So of the fact that so few of the educated remain long in the toil and submission of the itinerancy. The Methodist papers speak on both sides of this question. Zion's Herald recently published an article from a member of the English Conference, in

high standing, to the effect that those men in the English Conference that have been liberally educated seldom make good preachers. If, in that Conference, where the despotism is milder, this is true, much more must it be here. Consequently, after all that has been said of rearing an educated ministry; and after all the labor and zeal of individuals in the cause, the body, as a whole, practically frowns upon the work, and the leading ministry, at least, are willing to see it die. Bear in mind, that this body boasts of being the wealthiest church in the country. If it be so, and if it really desire an educated ministry, it has only to speak the word and it is done. But what is it actually doing? What encouragement does it give its young men to seek an education for the ministry? Just none at all. After a world of contest against the body's reluctance to have a Theological Seminary, such an institution by individual effort was brought into existence, at Concord, N. H. But that institution is now languishing and panting for breath. It is decidedly without the effective sympathy of the people and ministry.

My authority for this is the statement of one of its own professors, Prof. Vaill, recently made through *Zion's Herald*. He says :

“Nearly fifty students are now in attendance, but there are doubtless many more that would have been here, had it not been for the pinchings of poverty. A large number of our students are constantly embarrassed on this account. Of the sixty students now connected with the Biblical Institute, it is believed that about two thirds of them are entirely dependent on their own efforts for a living, and hence ought to have some aid while pursuing their studies. Only about one-third, that is twenty out of the sixty, it is believed, have the necessary means to pursue their studies uninterruptedly without embarrassment. The other two-thirds are obliged to teach school through the winter, or engage in selling books, or in preaching to small congregations. Some who have a knowledge of some trade must labor with their hands during their vacations, and their hours of recess, and oftentimes must trench greatly upon their hours of study. * * *

They must economize in every possible way. Their clothes must be worn as long as they possibly can hang together. They must board in the cheapest manner. Some of them cannot afford to board even in commons, at a cost of \$1.50 or \$1.75 per week. Some of these sons of the church do not know the luxury of a warm meal for days, and sometimes for weeks. * * *

“At the same time other denominations are saying to these men, ‘Only come to Andover, to East Windsor, or to New Haven, and *we* will support you.’ Nay, they even go farther than

this, and say, 'We will not even ask you to change your church relations; you may be Methodists. All we ask of you, is faithfully to attend on our instructions.' Only a few days since, two of our young men came to me and said they must leave. I, of course, inquired for the reason. They said their funds were nearly gone, and they could not stay. One said he had spent the last dollar, and must depend on borrowed means to leave the place. I inquired further, as to their plans—where they were going, and what they proposed to do. I was then frankly informed that the institution at —— had offered to take them and educate them, and support them gratuitously. What could I do, Mr. Editor, but hang down my head in sorrow, and frankly acknowledge that our church, our beloved church, is greatly remiss in its care of its rising ministry—yea, that our sister churches are more kind to the aliens of their faith, than we are to our own children?"

This, be it remembered, is from the Methodist theological professor, after bitter experience in providing for his beloved church, such a ministry as she does not want. But he proceeds:

"Allow me to say farther, Brother Wise, that we are strongly impressed with the great importance of doing something regularly and systematically for the relief of such young men as

we judge to be called of God to the work of the ministry. Some ten years ago when the New England Wesleyan Education Society was organized, we looked to that with fond hope that something efficient would grow out of it, for the aid of our indigent young men — that it might be the beginning in our church of the great and worthy work, now accomplished in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches by the American Education Society. Brethren of New England will not admit, I presume, that this society is entirely dead; certain it is, that we in this vicinity hear nothing about it, and whether it lives or not we cannot say.”

This tells us unmistakably how much Methodism really desires an educated ministry, and how small is her prospect that she will ever have one. The truth is, that all the seeds which the first Methodist ministers sowed broadcast in their preaching against book-learning have not yet exhausted their vitality. And so I have occasion here to retract a remark, which in my first book I made, conceding to Methodism at present a liberality in the support of education which it does not possess. I then said what I suppose to be the general understanding among us, that “Whatever errors they once had on that subject, they had fully repented of, and are now

zealous, as far as their circumstances and means will allow, to secure a learned ministry." I am sorry to say that better information does not warrant this concession.

But suppose a young man, in the face of all these difficulties, works his way to an education, what encouragement has he to devote that education to the Methodist ministry, when it is held in so little value, and may become a cause of persecution — when unless he obtains some of the prizes in the great lottery, he will be forced to live on short allowance the rest of his days? What encouragement there is to get an education may be seen from an article in *Zion's Herald*, from a member of the Maine Conference, some two or three years ago, as follows :

"Many of our membership have deeply sympathized with their pastors in their poverty, and have nobly struggled against the meanness and covetousness of those who have determined to keep their ministry on short allowance. There are found a few who seem to fear lest we should grow fat, and kick like Jeshurun, and kindly manifest their solicitude, especially when they happen to be on the Committee of Estimates, by placing every item at the lowest point. And then this class of men are very willing there should be a deficiency, and are often heard to

comfort the preacher in his loss, by reminding him that he did not get his whole claim the previous year. So their tender consciences are made quite easy in wronging the laborer of his hire, while 'all haggard and pale' the itinerant goes to another field of toil.

"There are ministers of this Conference, who have (I hardly dare to say) lived from year to year, with a family, on the pittance of \$121 to \$150, and from this all along up to the enormous sum of \$250.

"We have from year to year 10, 25, 30, 40 and 50 dollars as the estimates for table expenses, when the families are such that this allowance will give them but from one to two cents for the food for each meal. * * * In 1851 there were eight men with families, whose average receipts were only \$156. The deficiency amounted to the enormous sum of \$4,340, not a small sum for some seventy men to lose out of the small stipend allowed them."

The writer goes on to say, that one preacher, a graduate of a college — a good preacher and pastor — received for six years only an average of \$320, with which to support a family, when he might have earned a thousand by teaching, and with less labor. Another for five years averaged \$195, and another \$148.

He says there are those who are ready to

revel in a *cheap gospel*. If they mistrust that the preacher has a trifle laid up for a rainy day, they say, — “I shan’t give that preacher any thing; he is worth more than I am.”

This gives us a glimpse of the condition of the ministry in that body that claims to have the greatest numbers, the greatest wealth, and the greatest *sanctification*. If there is such pecuniary ability in that body, why does it perpetuate such a monstrous wrong upon its ministry? No other ecclesiastical body is so much a unit as the Methodist; and if it has this wealth anywhere in the body, it should be available for its prime function, its ministry. And if it exceeds other bodies in wealth, and if it so much excels them in pinching and starving its ministers, it herein presents a glaring feature of ungodliness. The Methodist church, boasting of being the richest, lives and thrives upon the sighs and groans of a robbed and down-trodden ministry; and every day and night there goes up against her for this thing a cry to heaven, “Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for the miseries that are to come upon you; your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver is cankered, and the rust of them shall be a witness against you. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields,

and which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

But a very general impression is, that the cause that is sustained by such a patient, suffering, and martyred ministry must be good. These sufferings of a ministry so abused do, in fact, constitute the main moral force of the body. If the Methodist church has not soundness of doctrine, vigor of discipline, genuineness in its conversions, nor consistency of Christian example, it can point you to a band of martyrs dying a living death in its ministry — a death inflicted by its own frauds and cruelties. And yet, overlooking the fact that these men are falling as martyrs to the covetousness and ungodliness of the church which they serve, their sufferings are received by us as so much evidence of the holiness of that church. Thus, what should be her shame and condemnation, is imputed to her for righteousness. In just the same way, Romanism sustains a succession of martyrs, whose poverty is her wealth, whose toils and weakness are her strength, and whose sighs and groans are the music in which her praises flow. And as in one case an infatuated fanatical attachment to a debasing system supplies the martyr-zeal, so in the other case a like zeal is

far from a demonstration of the goodness of the cause in which it is spent. No; theirs is a zeal worthy of a better cause; and their sufferings, seen in a proper light, make out the severest possible condemnation of their system. None but a corrupt corporation, with such immense resources at command, would sustain the revolutions of an engine that desolates so many homes, and crushes so many hearts.

METHODISM IN ITS RELATIONS TO HERESIES.

There is a natural sympathy between Methodism and Unitarianism, so far as doctrines are concerned, however diverse they may be in the developments of social life. Both have, more or less, the same opposition to the humbling doctrines of the cross; and hence, where circumstances favor it, there is an effectual sympathy between them. While Methodism cherishes a settled hatred to the doctrines of grace, it has mild rebukes and plausible apologies for those who subvert the foundations of all that is peculiar in Christianity, as the Unitarians and Universalists do. To illustrate this remark, we here give an extract from one of the highest standing in the Methodist church, Rev. B. F. Teft, D. D., of Cincinnati, who, in the Ladies' Repository, of

which he was editor, in an account of his visit to Boston and Cambridge college, shows how adroitly he could retain his position as a Methodist or Trinitarian, and yet burn sweet incense before the nostrils of the rabbis of Unitarian theology. He says, vol. x, p. 354:

“It has been often wished by far-seeing men, that a more spiritual priesthood presided at this modern oracle. I could most heartily wish so too. But I cannot give my voice to the general hue and cry, as if the robed spirits of this place were the ministers of darkness. * * * Some will not allow Channing to have been a Christian, hardly a philanthropist, because he was a Unitarian preacher. Such a man, however, can well dispense with the good opinion of such contemptible bigots, to whatever fellowship they belong, when he has been followed to heaven’s gate with the admiration of two hemispheres. I do sincerely wish, both for these critics and myself, as good a seat in paradise, as I believe is now occupied *by that best of all good and great men ever raised up by Massachusetts.* * * * There are now strong symptoms of a return to a heartier religious life among them, and when that shall pervade them generally, as it now does and always has, a considerable portion of them, they will be in all respects the most valuable and useful people of the western continent.”

A "*return*" of a heartier religious life, implies that they once had it. When was that day of high religious life among them? And of what kind is that life which has pervaded a considerable portion of them? The substance of this declaration is, that Unitarians want to be made only a little more so, or to perfect themselves in their own line, to be the most valuable men of the western continent. This comes from a Rabbi of Methodism.

Much in the same line may be seen in the antics of the Methodists and Unitarians' Seaman's preacher in Boston, and the use which Methodism makes of him and his position and work, as a solvent for an amalgamation of their own interests with Unitarians in Boston. Father Taylor is the idol of the Methodist body, sent for to give celebrity to all their great occasions and gala days. Yet he throws open his communion to Universalists and Unitarians, and makes a bold parade of this kind of liberality. He scouts the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead—that is, the doctrine with which, according to Paul's teaching, Christianity stands or falls. No better illustration of Methodism's easy virtue, touching Christian principle, can be needed.

The ease with which Methodists join with Uni-

versalists in sustaining union-efforts to destroy Calvinistic churches, and then the quick sympathy which opposers of religion generally have with Methodists in all cases where the interests of Methodists clash with those of more evangelical and more consistent sects, are a sign. The very instincts of irreligion teach such men that Methodism has something in common with their opposition to pure religion. Its warfare with the infinite purity and unrelaxed claims of the law of God, and also with the sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his grace, is one in which wicked men deeply sympathize, and hence that preference for Methodists over other professors of religion which is so common with the irreligious.

But this part of our subject is most effectually illustrated in the connections which Methodism has had with Millerism, one of the most debasing forms of fanaticism. Let us give one example : Rev. G. Fox, now a prominent member of the travelling ministry in this vicinity, was presiding elder in the Portland district in Maine, when Millerism was in blast. He said he had made Miller's theory a subject of prayer and study ; and that in answer to prayer he had received as clear a witness of the Spirit, in favor of that theory, as he had of his own justification. He

travelled through his district, having access to all Methodist pulpits, preaching everywhere that the end of the world was coming in 1843; and he employed his pen with great industry, and his writings were abundantly published in the Methodist periodicals. Several ministers and multitudes of people were gained to swell the triumphs of the fanaticism by him. There probably was not a man, except Miller himself, who did so much towards spreading the delusion as he. After the time in which he had promised that the end of the world should come, had passed, there was some complaint made in the Conference against him; and now we see the equivocal position of Methodism. The error of his preaching had been indicated on the dial-plate of time, and could not be denied. So the complaints brought against him in the Conference must be noticed. The bishop reproved him for his error, and requested him to confess it. But he made no confession, and suffered no ill consequences from his refusal. The truth was, Methodism had been willing that its ministers should take all possible advantage of the breeze that was blowing, to fill its own sails. Miller's doctrine was not a doctrine of Methodism, and yet if the falsehood of that doctrine could in any place contribute to increase the excite-

ment and multiply the spurious converts in Methodist meetings, the high and the low in the hierarchy were willing to see it employed.

But we have the best authority for going farther than this, and stating that Methodism welcomed thousands on thousands to its communion, who had been brought in by that disastrous breeze. Mr. Wise, the editor of *Zion's Herald*, says, "that at that time the great Millerite excitement swelled the numbers of the church of all denominations." We cannot speak for other denominations, but we are happy to say of our own, that it had no increase from that source. But Mr. Wise makes this the reason why the Methodist membership was so much larger in that year than it was immediately before and after. Now, for some cause, the whole church, south and north, that year, had an increase of 85,000: and the next year a decrease of 36,000. According to Mr. Wise's view of the case, northern Methodism must have profited by the use of the names of some 50,000 members received from the Millerite excitement. And how much of sympathy and tampering with Millerism, on the part of its ministers, was needful to secure this result, is easily imagined. Our denomination — and we might name others concurring with us in doctrines,

which did the same — bore a united testimony against that monstrous falsehood. And while the tornado of fanaticism was sweeping by, we spread no sails to catch from it even a distant breeze. Our ministry, with scarce an exception, treated it as an unmixed evil. Yet at that time Methodism, true to its double policy, decidedly undecided, sought both the advantages of opposition and concurrence, and so adroitly managed and leaped the crossing currents, as to have swept into its net a haul of 80,000. Most of this number came from that source, because this was the increase received, over what had been received the year before from the ordinary sources. Now, if I wanted the means of illustrating the utter want of principle which gives character to the ordinary policy of Methodism, here they are. There is a colossal hierarchy having a central counsel and will, which could have made itself known and executed in a month in every pulpit. Here was a grand opportunity for the ecclesiastical monarchy to use for good the power it held over subordinate minds and agencies. Had it then spoken a word of power against that pestilence, every subordinate minister would have obeyed. Methodism with one heart and voice would have resisted the evil. And if Methodism had not

aided it, it never would have acquired one tithe of the importance that it had. But hierarchies are not made for good ends, and are reluctant to subserve them. Now had come an opportunity to reap a grand harvest by the duplicity in which the spirit of Methodism is so adroit. She had ministers stationed on both sides of the line in that controversy, in gentle conflict with each other — publishing in Methodist papers the arguments of Millero-methodist writers. Mr. Cox's articles, for which the bishop afterwards bestowed an Eli's reproof, were published in Zion's Herald. So that both the ministry and the organs of that church were on both sides of the question; and all that the agitation raised by such a discussion in the public mind could do to induce persons to pass through the process of a Methodist artificial conversion, was received as a favor to Methodism. And all the conversions resulting from that foul conglomerate falsehood were welcomed as so many trophies of Methodism.

And so indeed they were, for Millerism is only Methodism intensified. The appliances of Methodism go to produce a certain result. They work in a certain way on the passions and imagination. They carry with them certain erroneous ideas of experimental religion, and work those

errors into and through the experience of the converts. Just the same erroneous ideas were conveyed and impressed and made effectual by the machinery of Millerism working with intenser energy. In this view, Millerism was Methodism intensified. And as the one contained in itself the elements of its own dissolution, so does the other, — the one dissolving more rapidly in proportion as it wrought more rapidly.

Again, the position of Methodism in relation to heresies and its sense of the importance of doctrinal truth, is evinced in a speech made by Rev. A. D. Sargeant at the great Methodist jubilee in Boston. He spoke (*Zion's Herald* says) of the importance of maintaining the "itinerancy, without which he questioned whether our purity of doctrine avail." Here is a declaration that it is the sense of Methodism that its true energy does not lie in the doctrines which it preaches, but in the work of its itinerant preacher; that these doctrines, preached in the ordinary way of preaching the gospel, would not secure the desired results. This is what we fully showed in our first book. Here it seems that Methodists attach greater importance to an element of their hierarchy, than they do to what they regard as the gospel of Christ. And this fully accounts

for all their latitudinarianism and all their tampering with heresies.

LAXITY OF DISCIPLINE.

Under another head I have alluded to the want of Christian discipline in Methodist churches, and some of my correspondents have said something upon it. But the subject has importance enough to justify a more distinct notice. We have an easy and effectual way of showing what is the mind of Methodism on this subject. We can show what is done in its high places, among those who control its agencies and destinies. New York is the metropolis of the M. E. Church North. It is the centre of its operations, the point which concentrates its leading men to conduct those operations. Now among the leading men of the Methodists there, the Messrs. Harpers, the world-renowned book publishers, stand conspicuous. What those gentlemen are in private life, we have no knowledge — we presume they are blameless; but what they are in public acts, is no secret. They have amassed wealth untold by publishing a pernicious and demoralizing literature. It is well known, that one of the broadest and deepest sources of the moral corruption of our people lies in just this yellow-covered literature. In all our

operations for home evangelizing, this poisoned literature is one of our great antagonists. As a cause of ruin to our youth, and of general moral degradation, it is not second to the use of intoxicating drinks; and the man who panders to corrupt appetite through the one, is as guilty before God as the other. Now if there is a firm the United States, that has done more to fill the land with this poisonous material than have the Harpers, we know it not. The catalogue of the Harpers' list of publications contains 325 novels. Our knowledge from actual inspection of these books is too limited to enable us to describe the character of each. Nor is that necessary. For the list contains the names of some of the worst that have been published — such as the “Mysteries of Paris,” the “Wandering Jew” and Bulwer's novels. These names stand on the catalogue to show that the Messrs. Harpers have not a conscience that can restrain them from publishing books of that character; and what that character is, is too well known.

It will need no argument to prove that such a wholesale work for the supply of the material of poisoned literature — a work that must issue in so much ruin — is not a work fit for professing Christians. What manufacturer or vender of

ardent spirits stands at the head of so broad a stream of ruin as one whose press supplies the material for bringing such a work as the "Mysteries of Paris" in contact with the minds of millions of our youth?

If the Harpers had been the *authors* of that work, would the production have been received from them as a work fit to come from Christian hands? But how much less is their responsibility, for having caused it to be translated from the French, and sent abroad in immense editions over the land? But it is not one work or two of this kind, which they have published. It is enough to say, that their list of novels — to say nothing of pernicious works in other forms — their list of novels contains 325. And these were chosen with a freedom from restraint which allowed them to include such execrable works as we have named. The amount of pernicious literature which that list contains, may be somewhat estimated by that fact. But the evil which it has done to immortal minds no tongue can tell. And from this the reader can judge what are the views and policies of Methodism, as to what is fit for Christians to do, or as to what is fit to be done, when such practices are found in members of the church. One of this firm is or has been an office-bearer in the

Methodist church. They are intimate with the leading men of the church in New York, and intimately coöperating with them in putting forward all the enterprises of Methodism. Their work done for Methodism is hardly inferior to their work done in the ministration of the yellow-covered literature.

Nor has the silence of Methodists in this matter resulted from inadvertence. One of the pastors of the church in Brooklyn, to which one of the Harpers belonged, expressed great abhorrence of this kind of literature, published by him, and yet saw reasons which satisfied him that it was not best to make his case one for discipline. Another Methodist preacher felt differently about it. He went from the State of Maine to New York, for the purpose of causing some steps of discipline to be taken, but he had to return *re infecta*.

Now the conclusion is inevitable, that for that work of the Harpers, be it what it may, — and every reader will form his own judgment of it, — the Methodist church is responsible. It is not a thing done in some obscure corner, unknown to the body. It is not an evil winked at by a single preacher; but an evil sustained by the full knowledge of the church — an evil which publishes itself in every pernicious book that goes forth from that

press bearing the name of its publishers. The evil has been one of twenty years' standing. It has been a subject of remark in the public journals, and Methodism has had an opportunity to choose its position deliberately respecting it. And thus Methodism has practically declared, that when such offences are committed by men who are important supporters of itself, it has no censures for them — that it is fitting that Methodism should receive the gains that come from such a source — that what does such a broad injury to public morals, is no injury to Methodism.

This single example is more effectual to show the corruption of Methodism in regard to discipline, than a hundred instances that might be gathered from less auspicious positions; because the whole body consent to and participate in the wrong of this. If any one inquires, What is the Methodist church as to discipline? here is an answer which may cover the whole ground. Look at the case of the Harpers, and you may be sure that the principles there acted on are the principles of action for the ministry and people through the body.

THE NARROWNESS OF METHODIST AIMS.

Opposition to Calvinism, or the doctrines of grace, is one of the leading impulses to Methodist

action. But Calvinism is not the only object to which Methodism antagonizes. If one adopts all the Methodist doctrines, and yet refuses to come under the power of the hierarchy, he is counted an enemy. For the following facts, I have the name and authority of the person concerned. He is a native of England, from whence he came, eighteen years ago. When a boy, he united with the Wesleyans there, though his parents belonged to the Established Church. He became a preacher with the English Methodists. When he came here, he found the Methodists so different from those in England, that he could not join them. He was forcibly struck, at first, and has been ever since, with the want of spirituality and practical piety among the Methodists here, when compared with the English Wesleyans. Because he could not conscientiously join the Methodist ministry, he applied himself to manual labor for his support, preaching, as opportunity offered, among orthodox denominations. After a while, he took charge of a church in Pennsylvania, with a people who held a union meeting-house in partnership with Episcopal Methodists. Here he took the first lesson in the overbearing and persecuting developments of Episcopal Methodism. Both the ministry and many of the people did what they

could to break him down and destroy his church. They made every possible effort to proselyte his members. Their minister labored privately with the people, to convince them that conversions among other sects were mostly spurious. And he publicly declared, at one time, that except the sinners there present would come up to *his* altar, and get religion, they must go to hell. At the same time, desperate efforts were set on foot, to destroy the reputation of some excellent members of the Presbyterian church, and especially of the minister who occasionally preached for them. Episcopal Methodists and their ministers gave out that Presbyterians were never regenerated, and never could be while they remained in that church. Hence they asserted that they were doing God service if they could prevent his occupying the pulpit.

The same trait of Methodist character has illustration in the recent treatment of a distinguished Irish Methodist. It will be observed that when an object is to be accomplished, the American Methodists boast of the exploits of the British Methodists, as if they were all their own, concealing the fact that there is an important difference. But now and then it comes out that there is difference enough to be a spur to bigotry.

A case which has occurred within a year is in point. Rev. Dr. Heather, a prominent minister of a Wesleyan body in Ireland, came over hither to raise funds to sustain the preaching of the gospel by Methodists in Ireland. But soon his efforts were violently assailed by Rev. Mr. Butler, of Lynn, in a letter published in *Zion's Herald*. Mr. Butler accused him of collecting money under false pretences, and more than insinuated that he was never ordained, and that he had never received the Doctorate, which he wore, and so remonstrated against the Methodist Episcopal Church contributing to his cause. Dr. Heather wrote a letter in reply to Mr. Butler's violent attack, requesting it to be published in *Zion's Herald*. Mr. Wise, the editor, published only a brief extract from it, and defended Mr. Butler's positions — though he had inserted the whole of Mr. Butler's very long letter, containing the attack. Here was an honored minister, in a connection that closely follows Wesley, who had been earnestly preaching the same doctrines with Mr. Butler more than thirty years, and yet so ruthlessly assailed, when he sought the sympathy and aid, in evangelizing Ireland, of the M. E. Church, which professes to be the most wealthy church in this country. But the attack was made on grounds that were wholly false. For

he had been regularly ordained and had received a Doctorate from a Presbyterian College of high standing. These are facts which Mr. Butler will not now dare to deny. Dr. Heather, in spite of this assault, accomplished the object of his mission. He has returned to Ireland with a large amount of money, raised in aid of his cause — little or none of which, it is presumed, after the treatment he received, came from the M. E. Church. Whether this attack upon him was a matter of policy, to make the other sects contribute as they did to support Methodism, or whether it was a matter of mere spite and bigotry, we shall not undertake to decide. This much is true, that while other sects were so free to contribute to aid Methodism, Methodism grudged to aid itself, in what would not go to swell the power of its hierarchy.

In Hawley's book on "Congregationalism and Methodism," the author gives a chapter of his own experience. He says: —

"The first year of my ministry was passed in Illinois, in a region of great moral destitution. There was but one Congregational and no Presbyterian minister within thirty-five miles of me. The Methodists had been accustomed to send a preacher to that settlement once a month. Scarcely had I entered upon my la-

bors, when the Methodists *doubled* theirs, by coming twice a month. At length, finding too much upon their hands, or that I was comparatively harmless, they came but one-third of the time. At the end of the year, I was invited to another field of labor, and then our Methodist brethren immediately fell back upon the plan of once a month. On what principle were more of their efforts necessary, when the ground was occupied by a Congregationalist minister? *Were half their labors expended in counteracting his influence?* I accommodated my labors to theirs, going to other settlements whenever a Methodist meeting was to be held in the village in which I resided. My own family, as did every family in the congregation, attended their preaching (though very few of the Methodists attended mine); and thus I could not but learn the great frequency with which Calvinism and Presbyterianism were made the theme of the preacher's discourse. After one assault of more than common violence, I prepared a sermon in reply; but finally refrained from preaching it, through deference to the feelings of my Methodist hearers, and through the influence of certain peace-principles, falsely so called. These facts are not given as anything peculiar, but simply as illustrations of our common experience and practice. *We have been silent till silence is a sin."*

A Methodist minister from England, after many years' residence in this country, said:—

"After a ministry of twenty-five years, I have suffered more from the M. E. Church than from all other sects put together. When I arrived in New York from England, about eighteen years ago, the Episcopal Methodists were very anxious to have me join them. But I objected to do so, mainly, on account of the church polity. The answer was, that it was very similar to the form of the British government under which I had lived. But I did not consider that a model for church government, and the answer had no force with me. I was settled some years since in a large town, now a city, and there was a revival in my church, during which several members of the M. E. Church near by came in and manifested much apparent friendship, while, at the same time, a standing committee of that church had been appointed, for the special purpose of proselyting from mine — which they succeeded in doing to a very great extent. I have been settled in several places where Episcopal Methodism has had a strong foot-hold, and have found that it would always endeavor to take advantage of other sects, to build themselves up at their expense. But I suffered little from them after I had come to know well their deceitful character."

Here let me call special attention to the evidence elicited from several of my correspondents, as to the very important difference between English Methodism and American. American Method-

ism boasts of what is done by the English, while many witnesses, who have surveyed the interior of both, testify that, in regard to church government, to evangelical doctrine, as actually preached, and more especially with regard to practical and consistent piety and beneficent action, there is a vast difference. Let the witnesses to these points be noted in their place. And is not the fact of this difference evident from another source? It is well known, that revivals of religion, in form as they are experienced here, are not known in England — that American revivals have, of late, been objects of curiosity and inquiry, on the part of Englishmen — as they could not be, if such revivals as our Methodists experience, — which present American revivals in gross caricature, — were common among the Methodists there. But if the English Methodists have nothing answering to the peculiar revival machinery of the Methodists here, that difference alone must beget other important differences. Abstract that machinery from American Methodism, and you make it quite another thing.

We were speaking of the narrowness of Methodist aims. The fact that when Methodists are providentially placed in communities where there is evangelical preaching, but no Methodist ministry, they more often neglect public worship,

clearly shows where the mind and heart of the system are. It shows, either that they do not regard the worship of other denominations as Christian worship, or that they have not a conscience which binds them to keep the Sabbath, in the public worship of God. In other words, it shows that Methodism, and not Christianity, is their aim. The fact of which we speak will need no proof to those who have had opportunity of observation.

But, to this point, I will introduce an extract of a letter, which I received from a minister in this State. The writer says : —

“In the community where I fill the pastoral office, there are two denominations, the Congregationalist and the Baptist. During my residence here of six years, there have been some twenty Methodist families in the place. Of these, two have married members of my church. These, with one other gentleman and his wife, have united with us. Of the remainder, only two or three families have attended public worship, except occasionally — some of them not enough to make it needful to rent seats. For a year or more a Methodist class was sustained in the place ; and, during the last six months of that year, the leader of the class was not in the house of God, on the Sabbath, once, unless, perhaps, when I was absent. Yet he, and all the rest of the Methodists,

professed attachment to me, and gave me a seemingly hearty welcome when I called on them. As to our prayer-meetings, none of their number, except those who have united with my church, and one other gentleman and wife, have ever appeared in them. For a time, they had a weekly prayer-meeting of their own, and, for about six months, they sustained Sabbath worship by themselves, when they were faithful in attendance. The inference which I have drawn is, that Methodism, and not Christianity, has been their aim. I have endeavored to interest them, and render their nominal connection with us pleasant, but they have appeared to lack a spirit of union.

“ My observation has convinced me, that, while there are honorable exceptions, as a class Methodists are less strict in the observance of the Sabbath, and less mindful of their Christian obligations, than are the members of other churches. It is so in this place. I have been several times upon the point of penning an article for *Zion's Herald*, to call the attention of the editor to these facts. I have named the facts to Methodist clergymen, in whom I have great confidence, and it seemed to be intelligence which they were not expecting.”

CAMP MEETINGS.

It is no objection to a religious meeting that it is held in the field ; and the gathering of great numbers in a field meeting for several days, in places where regular congregations do not exist,

may be a happy expedient to supply the preaching of the gospel to those who could have it no otherwise. But camp meetings, got up without necessity, to gratify that class of feelings that are gratified in picnics, in military encampments and musters, are so much the more pernicious for connecting religion with that class of gratifications. We are aware that many Methodists express disapprobation of the camp meeting system; and the fact that so many minds that have been trained to approve of the other peculiarities of Methodism, cannot approve of this, is very impressive testimony against it. But whether approved by Methodists or not, it is a very important fixture of the edifice of Methodism; and the Methodist minister that should give his testimony against it would thereby ruin his standing. The camp meeting system is growing in importance, while Methodism itself is declining — and for this reason among others, because Methodism is declining. One of its leading uses is to rally and recruit a flagging interest. It has been common to get up a camp meeting in places, when a special onset was to be made, or when a desperate effort was needed to heal a declension of a particular church.

But the more general subservience of camp meetings to Methodist purposes is, to supply the

demand which its people, trained as they are, have for the mixture of amusement with religion, of which we have before spoken. He knows little of the source of that power by which Romanism holds its vassals, who has not observed how it mingles amusement with all its sacred things. It makes its Sabbaths, days of religion and days of sport — days for mass and days for visiting and dancing. Its countless *holy days* are as many *holidays*. Its most solemn acts are performed in pompous processions and scenic displays. Its highest forms of worship have the fascinations of painting, music and other artistical accompaniments, and through the whole tissue of Romish institutions and forms, whatever is addressed to the reverence and the religious element of the human mind, is placed in close contact with what is suited to gratify the fancy, the passions and the love of amusement and sport. So it was with idolatrous worship of old. “The people sat down to eat and drink” in honor of their false gods, “and rose up to play.” So all the rites of Roman and Grecian idolatry in a similar way, mingled religious exercises with frolic and fun; and almost all corrupt religions have done the like. So I conceive that the corrupt element which is in the Methodist system, is leading in the same

direction. There is no question, that what makes the camp meeting so attractive to so many, is the romantic element, or the amusement connected with it, or the fact that so much that is serious is brought into such contact with so much that is of a contrary character. To many minds, this affords an intense excitement ; and if this view be correct, the prevalence of camp meetings is at once a sign and cause of a corrupt religion. I should want no better proof of this than a true picture of a camp meeting. Let the reader glance at the following sketch of the *exterior* of one, drawn by one who has been often an eye-witness of the great camp meetings at Eastham. The writer lived in that vicinity. His remarks were published in the Puritan, December 23, 1842. The extract follows.

“My ideas on this subject have been mostly derived from what I have seen, for several years, of these meetings at Eastham, on Cape Cod, where the Methodists from the vicinity and those from Boston and the region around, meet each year in a beautiful grove, which they own, and where they have a large building for the accommodation of their preachers, and for storing their tents and other fixtures, when they are not in use. A Methodist corporation, who manage the business concerns of the meeting, charter a steam-

boat each year, to come from Boston, and numerous vessels run during the time of the meetings, between the camp ground and all the principal places on the sea-coast of Massachusetts. Thus, from a great variety of motives, a vast multitude of people is collected. At the landing a truly motley group may be seen. Most of the passengers, it is true, are Methodists, but what are the rest? Yonder is a group of mischievous shop-boys, full of all manner of evil; and they will go home no better than they come. There goes a load of sportsmen, with their guns on their shoulders, and half a dozen dogs, Tray, Blanche and Sweetheart in the rear. Then comes a confectioner with his mead and beer bottles, and his load of saccharine temptations, and after him a baker, followed by a fellow with a barber's staff. This last will be needed Sabbath mornings at least, and thus it goes on to the end of the chapter. If you go to the camp ground, almost everything there looks like a kind of fair, or place of traffic, and there are many that do not hear a single sermon through the meeting. The corporation, which figures largely on such occasions, not only charters a steamboat, and conveys all sorts of characters, but also keeps an extensive boarding establishment, and so manages matters as to be no losers in their business. Cooking and baking are carried on largely, and great numbers are employed in the victualling and other tents, or the tents on the camp ground; as also in all the region round, in providing for boarders and taking care of the multitude of horses

collected there. All in the vicinity who have boats and carriages are busily employed in conveying passengers, not only to the camp ground, but also to taverns and other places of dissipation. Such a market time is not to be lost. Whoever has any butter, milk, eggs, bacon, lard, oats, rye, straw, blackberries, pond lilies or anything else to sell, must improve his time, to say nothing of keeping numerous boarders and horses. I have often thought that were the Saviour to make his personal appearance at that grove, professedly consecrated to him, he would make a scourge of small cords and drive the crowd of traffickers forth from thence, not excepting the "corporation" who head the whole concern.

"We might here allude to the fact, that all sorts of characters are brought together. Sometimes a coach regularly runs to and from a rum-selling tavern in the neighboring town, and the two last years a rum-selling carriage was on the ground. One of these, which I saw on its way thither, resembled an omnibus and came from Boston, a distance of a hundred miles or more, over a heavy road. It was drawn by four horses and painted a variety of the gayest colors — a regular "striped pig" on wheels. It carried passengers short trips in the vicinity of the camp ground, charging them twelve and a half cents each *for the ride*—making no charge for the creature comforts furnished by the way. Sometimes a court, held by a Justice of the Peace, is in session during most of the meeting, to settle disturbances and difficulties which occur.

The horse jockey, the pedlar and the licentious mingle in the motley throng. The reputation of the females in the vicinity suffers every year from the conduct of the profligate of their own sex from abroad, who are said to frequent camp ground. Good preaching may be heard during the meeting. But orthodox doctrines, ministers and newspapers come in for a full share of ridicule and low vulgar abuse.

The worst evil, however, is the extensive and reckless desecration of the Sabbath. On that day far more than others, the whole community is in motion. Loaded vehicles, cracking whips, foaming steeds and humming wheels are the order of the day. It is the great holiday of all the young, gay and thoughtless of both sexes, who from the distance of twenty miles or more thus drive in throngs to the holy fair. Of the many young people of my acquaintance who have frequented the camp ground on the Sabbath, I could rarely learn that any of them heard either a sermon or a prayer. They strolled about with a view to amuse themselves and gratify curiosity merely; and I have no hesitation in saying, that on camp meeting Sabbaths they have seen more evil than during all the rest of the year; and that many of them have at such times learned more wickedness than they had ever known elsewhere. No other cause contributes so much to the disregard of the Sabbath in this region as these meetings. The high excitement of such large assemblies is also peculiarly unfavorable to the success of the

ordinary means of grace—producing as it does a fitful spasmodic kind of religion, and leading to the belief that piety consists merely or mainly in strong excitement of the animal feelings and passions.”

Thus far the writer above named has described the exterior of camp meetings, or the doings of the outsiders. If one could give as graphic a description of the interior — the exercises at the tents, and the preaching stand — the things said and done in this tent and that, in some instances continued through a whole night by people half delirious with waking and with exhausted nerves—the mixture of the serious with the comic on those occasions; yea, of the tragic with the comic, such as is had where exhausted nerves bring on the trances and the faintings; yea, and the feignings of trances,— could these be as well told, the view would be complete.

Here is the same dealing with awakened persons, or with those who will allow themselves to be thus called, as is had at the altar or anxious seat under ordinary Methodist preaching. This dealing is usually conducted on the basis of a false conception of the way of salvation. The idea seems to be, that the work is in two parts — man’s part and God’s part, — and if man will do his, God

will do His. The necessity of a new creation in Christ Jesus — a regeneration by the power of God unpurchased and uninduced by works of righteousness that we have done — the need of the working of that power which wrought Christ, when he was raised from the dead, to slay the sinner's enmity and bring him to accept of Christ, is left out of view. Sinners are called "poor mourning souls;" more to be pitied than blamed for their sinfulness. They are called "mourners in Zion," instead of being tenderly and faithfully told of their guilt and danger, and urged to submit to Christ. They are called penitent when they give no evidence of conversion. The minister asks one if he feels that he has been blessed, and he says, No! He tells him, then, "Say you are blessed, and shout glory, and you will be blessed."

After the sermon, and after the minds of the hearers are wrought up to the highest possible point of excitement, certain seats are pointed out for those who are willing to come forward to be prayed for, and such are invited to take them. Then singing commences and runners are sent round through the assembly, to address individuals and urge and persuade them to come forward. If these are not successful, the minister goes

himself. If a few are persuaded to come, then commences a process not unlike the auctioneer's repetitions of his bids, to induce the higher bids. The few who have come forward, are used as a means of raising the excitement and bringing others. Pathetic and pressing exhortations are made. Parents, brothers and sisters express their passionate desires that their relatives should come forward, as if their salvation depended on it. Tears of sympathy flow in all directions. Some are reluctantly dragged forward by their friends, and others, yielding to the contagious flow of feeling, press forward themselves. Now there is a *rush* for the altar, attended with shouts and cries of high excitement. Some are deeply impressed, and more have no religious impression at all. But they are made to believe that by this mere change of seats they have done one important thing, and taken the first step towards salvation. But all are called mourners and penitents, and urged to say that they are blessed, and to shout glory, and when induced to speak, they are cheered on and congratulated, and thanks are given for their conversion.

Now it is no wonder that by this process spurious conversions are multiplied so fast. Nor is it any wonder, that those who have been taught by

ministers and Christians to believe that that process is the conversion which the New Testament requires, should afterwards conceive an unconquerable disgust and contempt for the religion of the New Testament. This is little else than a machinery for turning out infidels by scores.

CHAPTER IV.

CORRESPONDENCE AND DEDUCTIONS FROM IT.

I HAVE collected into this chapter a variety of letters which I have received, touching the subject under discussion. Some were written without expectation of their being inserted ; and for this and other reasons, I have in some cases withheld the names of the writers. But I have responsible vouchers for all that is here written. The first is from a minister who was for a while in the service of the Maine Missionary Society.

LETTER I.

Rev. and Dear Sir : —

I was sent in July of 1853 to spend a few months in II——, Maine ; my instructions were, to unite with any evangelical society which might be laboring there. When I arrived in my field of labor, I learned that the Methodists had been occupying the house of worship one fourth of the time during the year past, and I thought it would

be advisable to allow them still do it, though their number was small. I accordingly sent word to that effect to the minister, who lived in an adjoining town. But now he would not preach in the town ; nor did he call to see me upon the matter. I then requested him to call ; but he did not. He soon left the region. The Methodists reported that I would not allow him to preach in my house. The entire field was then left to us and the Universalists, who occupied the Unitarian house with a small society. Our members were from fifty to seventy-five, but soon began to increase ; and the Sabbath School increased, and every where signs of permanent good appeared. In the spring of 1854, our audience had increased to near or quite two hundred, and there was a greater degree of interest manifest than there had been before for many years.

At this time the Methodist presiding elder of the district proposed sending a minister who should preach a part of the time in II——. Two or three members of the society came and asked my advice upon the matter ; I told them plainly, that it would not be wise, for there was only people enough for one society. They admitted, that with the exception of perhaps two or three women, the people were well suited with the minis-

ter which they had, and all were united in him. When they wrote to the presiding elder to this effect, and suggested that another minister would create a division, which would not result in good, he replied that "*Methodism must be represented there.*" I then offered to exchange with Methodist ministers as often as they wished. To this the presiding elder replied, that a Methodist church must be built up there. I then told him that I would make some arrangement by which they might occupy our church a part of the time; but that would not do. So they engaged the Universalist house, which was then vacant, and began their work.

When the new minister came, I called upon him, and expected that he would return my call. But months passed away and he did not enter my study. I supposed him busy; but soon found that his people were reporting the stories of the year before,—that I would not allow their minister to preach in my house, and that I would not exchange with him, nor call upon him, &c., &c., &c. No stories were too false or too base for them to coin and circulate against the Congregationalist minister. Refutation was useless. The whole village was completely stirred up, all parties and interests united together, *ostensibly at*

least, against the common enemy ; Congregationists, Universalists, Infidels, and Methodists constituted the entire force. The Methodist minister made a speech to suit the rum-seller, spoke soft things for the Infidels, and easy things for the Universalists. His evident design was, to unite all the force he could muster against evangelical religion. Perhaps I judge him harshly ; but that appeared to be his single aim. The result was what might have been anticipated, and perhaps was anticipated. I surely foresaw it. My own audience dwindled to its original number, and all religious interest died out. The hopes of good to that region were crushed. When the excitement died away, the people ceased to go to either house of worship ; and the stories, scarcely believed when circulated, were counted as so many truths against Christianity. Seeing that all hope of immediate and permanent good was at an end, I asked the Board to dismiss me from my field. I have since heard from the place, and also from my people there — that there are few that attend the meetings at either of the houses — that the people are relapsing into their old state of Sabbath desecration — and that the end is not yet.

LETTER II.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—

In perusing your late work, I felt that Methodism in Massachusetts and Methodism in Maine were more than twin sisters. Though my sphere of observation has been somewhat limited, and my contact not very close, yet I have experienced similar courtesies from Methodist ministers, to those related of Swampscott. When one or two Methodist families resided in my parish, ministers and members from neighboring towns have come in and established class meetings and prayer meetings, and expressed great wonder and regret that my people did not attend. In times of special interest they have crowded in at lectures and prayer meetings whenever the time was not occupied by us. Not content with this, they have pressed into meetings of my own appointment and made up largely of my own church and people, and taken the lead of the meetings, and occupied a large part of the time. They have urged those who attend upon my ministry, and are its constant supporters, to join the Methodist class, and attend the Methodist meetings upon the Sabbath—though it involved their going three times the distance—and though some of the families were

members of my church, and none of them were Methodists. To say that such audacious proselyting met with a signal failure — being regarded by me as utterly below all honorable opposition — is only to say that it was attempted on the soil of New England. I am happy to say that not all Methodist ministers have gone so far from the Golden Rule. How far such measures are chargeable to the men, and how far to the system, I will not say. It is plain that Methodism is proverbial for this thing. Maine is full of weak parishes of different denominations, struggling for præminence, all unfriendly to the “old standing order.” Among these, the Methodists bear the palm in Jesuit practices.

But let us look the system in the face. Once in one or two years, at most, every minister changes his place. He has little to fear from any offended neighbors. He may run up a great score of offences against good neighborhood and the proprieties of life, and depart, and leave all behind him. If he awakes an odium, it is against himself rather than the people. He departs, and like the scapegoat, he bears it away to a distant land, and leaves his people to stand blameless. Then the places to be occupied by the ministers are vastly different, as to desirableness. Each

one's success in gathering in numbers is his title to favor, and his recommendation to the bishop for a good appointment the next year; and no trophies are so highly prized as those won from the horrors of Calvinism. The result is, that the system operates to pay a premium for all these encroachments and outrages. So, while the acts above described were taking place in my own field of labor, when Sabbath evening meetings were regularly held, and regular evening meetings weekly, other neighborhoods, less distant from the Methodist meeting-house, were seldom or never entered.

Another mode of reprehensible operation is not unfrequent. In some of our parishes, limited as to numbers and resources, a Methodist family or two may be found. Some little disaffection with the minister, or with the parish movements, may arise. The ebullition of feeling is seized as a godsend for Methodism, and the banner is immediately afloat; all the disaffected of the parish will be encouraged and welcomed; a union meeting house is built, in which Universalists are invited to take part, and every nerve is strained to fill it from the old parish. After a while, however, the excitement which sustained the union meeting dies away; the house is shut up; all the active

participants in the movement have imbibed bitter prejudices against the old church, and will never be seen in their meeting again. This "noble machine, which works so well," has accomplished its object; it has crippled and diminished a Calvinistic church, and turned over others to the blessings of heathenism. Quite a portion of the people not now attending public worship in Maine, have been placed in this position by this class of means. Methodism pretends to great catholicity. It has a right hand of fellowship for everybody and every thing. But to Calvinism it gives the hand of Joab. Its platform is ingeniously constructed, covered on its surface with Christian union. But the union is only meal covering the skin of a Methodist teacher. No Sabbath school can be formed with the approbation of Methodist ministers, on the union plan, nor on any terms but the adoption of Methodist question books, libraries and papers. If union prayer meetings are held, those who take part in them must use only Methodist tools. If they do not conform to Methodist modes, the place is made too warm for them. Every Congregational female must be importuned to speak or pray, and be shot at if she refuses. Every member that does not come up to the Methodist standard of boisterous language

must be scourged with tongue. The union meeting must, by such means, be made a thorough-going Methodist meeting, or it is a failure.

A specimen of this sort of union has recently come under my observation. In ———, the Congregationalists and Methodists used a house of worship alternately; the former owned the larger share, having the oldest church and the largest society. Signs of awakening appeared. The Congregational minister proposed to the Methodist to hold a series of united meetings. He at once declined it, and then commenced a protracted meeting of his own, assisted by able Methodist ministers. The interest increased. But the people, viewing it as one-sided and overreaching, forebore, to a great extent, to attend it. This induced the Methodist minister to invite his Congregational brother to join with him, well knowing that he would bring the people with him. He complied; and, though he had been in the ministry near twenty years, and had much experience in powerful revivals; and though the Methodist was an inexperienced licentiate, yet this stripling took the lead of the meetings, and controlled everything in his own way, and, in the end, he strove hard (to use his own term), “*to string all the fish.*”

Though aware of the unsoundness of their revivals, they adhere to the same ruinous measures that produce them. A Methodist minister who had declined taking a station because of ill-health, was employed to preach for a short time to a Free-will Baptist congregation, near my field of labor. An excitement was soon raised, and pressed up by every known expedient, and converts were numbered accordingly. Ministers of the Free-will church soon came in, and received them into a branch of their church. This was not altogether pleasing to the Methodist elder. On meeting with him, I made particular inquiries about all these movements, and he frankly told me all. Among other things, he told me that a certain number of the converts had joined the church, adding: "*Between you and me, I guess about six months will use them up.*" Still he preaches in this way, and uses all the measures which he knows to be productive of these spurious results.

But I must forbear. Gladly would I consign these things to oblivion. But totally disagreeing with Mr. Van Buren, I do not feel that it is a "noble machine, and works well." Long have I felt with deep grief the disastrous workings of it, and have often expressed the sentiments boldly set forth in your history of Lynn.

Yours, &c.

LETTER III.

SOMERVILLE, August 23, 1855.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—

I embrace this opportunity to convey to you a few of my sentiments. From the first announcement of your recent work, I felt a warm interest in its subject. I purchased a copy of it, and you may conceive my surprise, when I reached that portion that treated of the introduction of Methodism, to find that instead of writing the Methodist history of Lynn, you were giving what was essentially the annals of our obscure and distant New England town. I refer to the town of Putney, Windham County, Vermont, my native town. I write that I may contribute something to show, that the statements contained in your book, are not by any means idiosyncratic of Lynn, but that they are the generic characteristics of Methodism, in all circumstances. At the period of the advent of Methodism the town of Putney had nearly 1,500 inhabitants, and these were in the geographic limits of a Congregational parish, except a distant part of the town, which contained a small but pious and devoted society of Calvinistic Baptists. The Congregational church had for its pastor Rev. Elisha D. Andrews, whose religious

views, if not strictly Calvinistic, were not Arminian. But they were held in connection with the lax practices and administrations which proved so powerful for mischief among the New England churches fifty years ago. He, like many of our rural clergy of the olden time, had a large and valuable farm, and was quite assiduous in its improvement. Perhaps you may have seen in your younger days, his system of irrigation, wonderful in its fertilizing results, depicted in the almanacs. It is evident, that whatever may have been his theological views, his agricultural enthusiasm greatly preponderated, to the detriment of his clerical usefulness. His society, embracing as it did the town, contained many that were not members of the church. Among others were John Campbell, M. D., and a Mr. Underwood.

A blacksmith of the place wished to procure of Mr. Andrews a quantity of wood, of which to make charcoal. Mr. Andrews in the sale of the wood wished for security, and Mr. Underwood and Dr. Campbell became his sureties. The blacksmith failed of payment, Dr. Campbell was ready to pay his part, but Mr. Underwood demurred, and to revenge himself on Mr. Andrews, for insisting on the payment, he made haste to introduce to the hitherto quiet parish,

a Methodist preacher, who by his apparent zeal drew off several of Mr. Andrews' most pious and reliable friends. These movements were much facilitated by the inaction of Mr. Andrews and the church. The adherents of the Methodists were situated, for the most part, in one section of the town, and had constituted the cream of the church and parish. Afterwards, however, some of the seceders returned to the old church. Mr. Underwood being a man of large means, his house became what was called the Methodist tavern.

Mr. Cushman, the pioneer minister, soon run his race, and after various enormities of a licentious character, brought his public career to a sudden close, under sentence for a term of years in the State prison for the crime of forgery. This took place some twenty years ago. And here the question naturally arises, whether an enterprise, begun for such purposes and under such auspices, might expect the blessing of God. But I proceed with the narrative. After Mr. Cushman departed, the preachers who were stationed in Putney were for intellect and power, selected according to the prospects of the field. When the returns to the Conference were encouraging, they had a *smart* preacher, and the reverse when the returns were different.

As a prelude to any attempt to make a permanent impression in Putney, they held a camp meeting, more properly called a *Saturnalia*. This was in the year 1834. I was then a mere lad, but the boisterous noise which they made, struck me with surprise. My father's house was half of a mile in a direct line from the place, yet the noise was very audible at that distance. You are doubtless familiar with accounts of losing strength, &c. Suffice it to say, the usual programme, even to its minutest details—disgusting as they are—was enacted in a style worthy of the palmier days of Methodism. The strength gained to Methodism hereby, as set forth in numbers, was about 150. They then built a large brick chapel costing \$3000 dollars. Here they held their meetings with varied success for six years, till 1840, when their numbers were reduced to twenty-five, as I myself heard the preacher declare. About this time, the remnant of the society left the east part of the town, where the original seceders lived, and where the camp meeting had been held, and had preaching in the town-hall. For the two years following, that is, '41 and '42, their numbers being still more reduced, they had no preacher. In '43 a spasmodic effort was made, and a large brick church was built in the centre of the town,

at a cost of \$4000. A preacher was sent by the Conference, *to convert persons enough to pay for the new church.* He announced this as his commission, in his sermon. He introduced a noted evangelist to *get up* a revival. The greatest professions of fraternity were tendered to the Congregational church — but not generally accepted by them. The result proved, that revivals of pure religion are not to be originated like baby shows, *et id omne genus.* During 1845 and 1846 the church was not occupied statedly—but only occasionally by those novices of whose aid Methodism knows so well how to avail itself. Matters went on growing worse yearly, with the prospect of extinction near. Then a resort was had to a camp meeting, to rejuvenate the dying relics of the once rampant Methodism of Putney. Their efforts were attended with but indifferent success. In 1850 another camp meeting was held on the ground of the former, with much the same result. Since 1850, by the aid of several adventitious causes, the Methodists have maintained a precarious existence, until by the action of the Vermont Conference in declining to station a preacher there for the present year, I should judge that Methodism there was dead.

Thus I have given you a brief history of this

attempt, to "spread scriptural holiness" in Putney. Permit me to allude to some of its results. When it commenced, Putney was a quiet united parish; now it is distracted. Although the Congregational church still lives, yet its hands have been weakened, and its efforts crippled. East Putney, the scene of the first Methodist labor, is truly a moral desert, and I know of no darker or more forbidding field of missionary labor than that. Irreligion in all its forms is prevalent. For this state of affairs in that once prosperous section of the town, who is responsible? I can give but one reply — Methodism. I am ashamed to make this report of what may seem a result of the working of the Congregational polity; for so it will be taken by many superficial thinkers, not laying the blame to the unworthy hands that opened the way for the schism. It is my native town, around which my youthful associations cluster — but not half so full of hope for the future as the yet unbroken prairie.

I can give my testimony unqualifiedly to the correctness of your statements about the percentage of the Methodist converts falling off, and about the character of their backsliders. A more complete wreck of character, I have never seen,

than among some of these persons. Nine tenths of all the persons who joined the class or the church in Putney have left them. Some also, who have reflected on the final result of Methodism, have joined the Congregationalist church. But I will pause. If I were to go into further details of this case, I should only be repeating what you have better said in your book. My earnest desire is that it may have a wide circulation among the sons of the Puritans. I thank God that he has given you boldness to speak out, and let the truth be magnified. I see that the *Wise* man is laboring to break the force of your strong reasons and stronger facts. But he is doomed to disappointment. Your explanation made some weeks ago in the *Puritan Recorder*, as to the Congregational statistics in Windsor county, Vermont, by referring a part to the operations of the Methodists, was truthful.

I am, with sentiments of great respect,

Your obedient servant,

RILEY PALMER.

LETTER IV.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—

The operations of Methodism, and its fruits, produced in a long course of years, may have il-

lustration in the experience of the town of Kittery, Maine, which is one of the suburbs of Portsmouth, N. H. The original Congregational church of this town, dated its origin among the early Puritan churches, and in its early days it had a desirable history. Soon after the introduction of Methodism there, the pastor of the Congregational church, presiding in a large and wealthy parish, but actuated by the false liberty which has done so much to help in the work of desolation, directly countenanced the progress of Methodism among his people. The Methodists, of course, had a rapid growth, and so advanced upon the Congregational society, that about the time of his death, he advised his people, instead of sustaining the Congregational society any longer, to connect themselves with the Methodists. Upon this the Methodists became the only society in the place, and had a rare chance to work out the pure results of Methodism, with none to hinder them. And with slight exceptions, they have had all in their own way there now for the last thirty years. In that wealthy parish may now be seen a meeting-house having more the appearance of a dilapidated barn, than that of a sanctuary for the worship of God. The estimation in which the church is held by the Confer-

ence, is learned by the ministers whom they send to it. One of the recent ministers sent to that station, did not possess the rudiments of a common education. A few years ago, a revival took place there, in which there were said to have been about a hundred conversions. A flaming letter containing the intelligence, was published in Zion's Herald; and at the succeeding Annual Conference the presiding elder gave a most encouraging report of the prosperity of the society, while at the same time the society had just defrauded its minister out of a large part of his meagre salary. And this was a fact not of a new class. For at the close of the preceding year, the minister's salary of \$370 was minus \$120. In a few months after the so-called revival, *all, with very few exceptions*, who had made a profession during its progress, were numbered among backsliders, and the state of religion and morals in the place, had become, if possible, more deplorable than before. Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

Dear Sir:—

In one of the towns in the western half of Massachusetts, a Methodist society has existed more than half a century. It is one of the old-

est in that part of the State. Here the longer Methodism has been known, the more it has failed to command public respect and confidence. In the language of one of its leading adherents there, "*Methodism is below par*," after a standing of more than fifty years. The state of morals in the society and out of it, to say nothing of the state of piety, is most deplorable. A revival occurred there a few years since, in which the number of converts counted was *seventy-five*. In a short time afterwards only about seven of that number afforded evidence of piety, or even professed to be Christians. The minister stationed over the society seemed to aim to swell the numbers, as much as possible, without regard to the means employed. The chief actor in that so-called revival, was one who had formerly been a minister of the M. E. Church; but at the time he no had nominal connection with the denomination, though professing to sympathize with it. He had a peculiar power of exciting passions and working upon the fears. The stationed preacher allowed him to conduct the meetings in his own way during the principal part of the time. Yet at the same time he well knew his character, and knew that he sustained the reputation of having been guilty of swindling in repeated instances. He

even went so far as to put some members of his society on their guard against him lest they should be circumvented by his tricks in money matters, while he was employing him to preach the gospel, in what was called a revival of religion! These few facts may throw much light on the subject of Methodist revivals — their causes and results — and they need no comment. They are at your disposal. Names of persons and places are communicated for your private use.

Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

Rev. and Dear Sir : —

I have recently read your book, and have been on the point of giving you a sketch of the introduction of Methodism into Thetford, Vt., but have hesitated somewhat. For a long series of years, the venerable Asa Burton, D. D., was successful in keeping Methodism and other isms out of the town, and of rearing a church there, scarcely excelled by any other church in New England, for its knowledge and ability to defend the Calvinistic system of doctrines. Sometime not far from the commencement of the present century, he preached a sermon on False Teachers, which was published, and for which, the Meth-

odists never forgave him. I am not able to state the year when Methodism got a foothold in the town, but it was not till a long time after they had marked it out as "Satan's Seat."

In the Autumn of 1834, I passed a night with a gentleman at a tavern, and casually mentioned having passed the previous Sabbath in Thetford. "Thetford," said he, "I have long wished to know something of that town. — Do you know anything of it?" Having told him that I was brought up there, and what I knew of the religious tone of the place, he replied, that it was as he suspected, and that it was not so much the wickedness of the place, as its Calvinism that awakened so intensely the Methodist sympathy. He then gave me substantially the following narrative : — He said that some twenty or twenty-five years before, he spent a night at a tavern, with some eight or ten Methodist elders ; among them was a presiding elder, and one of their bishops, all, or most of whom, were enjoying the hospitality of the tavern-keeper. They had either been, or were going to their State Conference. They seemed to be in high spirits, especially so when any one could tell of any aggression made on the Calvinistic churches. Several strongholds of Calvinism were mentioned ; but Thetford and

its Hopkinsian minister and church, seemed to be the point of special interest and special hate. Said the bishop — “ If there is one place in Vermont, above all others, where Satan’s seat is, it is Thetford ; and if the devil has a special agent in destroying souls, and dishonoring God, that agent is the minister of that place. Why, there is scarcely a man there, that calls his soul his own : most of the young people think he made them. Now,” said he, “ brethren,” addressing the elders, “ you must hang round the outskirts of Thetford, for twenty or twenty-five years, *if need be, to get a foothold there*. It is one of those places that cannot be taken by storm. It can be carried only by investment and stratagem. Little can be done while that old Calvinist lives, or is as active as he now is. You must keep your eye on the place, and be ready for aggressive movements the moment he dies, or begins to lose his strength and influence. He can’t live forever, or keep the people in bondage forever, as he now does. Keep your eyes open therefore ; and if a farm is to be sold, be sure to get some good warm-hearted Methodist brother, who loves Methodism, to buy it ; if need be, loan him money for the purpose. Or if opportunity offers, get some Methodist mechanics to settle in some of

the villages, that may in time spring up — (Christ, you know, was a carpenter), — and have preaching at his house occasionally — only *occasionally* at first. Do n't be discouraged by delay, you will do well if you can get some such foothold in twenty years. Then, as soon as you get a foothold, press the idea of a 'town-house.' ”

Such, substantially, were the directions given, as related by this gentleman. My first acquaintance with Methodism in Thetford, was on this wise. In the fifteenth year of my age, that is, in 1815, I first became interested in religion. In one of the grist mills, near the line of Thetford and Norwich, there was a miller, who was a Methodist, and I had before heard him talking very earnestly on religion. Father wished me to go to mill, and let me choose one of these mills, which were about equally distant. I chose this; for, having more zeal than knowledge, I expected to have a good time with so good a Methodist. But he said nothing. Though disappointed at this, I was determined to have the good time. I told him that I thought I had found the Saviour, and tried to get him to talk, but he shook his head, and said, “I haint got no religion to-day. I ar' — I can't talk no religion to-day. If I had died yesterday, I should a' gone right straight to heaven: but, if

I should die to-day, I should go right straight to hell. I am fallen from grace." He then said something about John Calvin's ridiculous notion of, "Once a Christian, always a Christian."—It was the devil's doctrine. "Why, a man may be a saint one minute, and a devil the next. What do you think of that, my boy?" It was all Greek to me.

My next experience was with a Methodist cooper, in the same neighborhood with the miller. "He had not committed a sin," he said, "in thought, word, or deed, for six weeks." Oh! how I wished I could be as good; and yet it seemed to me, that he was not only amazingly ignorant of the nature of sin, but also of his own heart. It was through the influence of this miller, cooper, and a few others, that in process of time Methodism got a foothold in the town: but not till it had literally hung around the outskirts of the town, and invested it almost on every side, for many years. After the town house was built, a regular preacher was appointed, and stationed at the centre. The first preacher was one who had been a Congregationalist: he used much of the wisdom of the world. He said there was very little difference between Methodists and Congregationalists; he should have

remained with the latter, *only* there was so much more love and liberty among the Methodists, and so much more zeal in saving souls. Opposition, I think it was, to their occupying the town-house, though I am not sure, which was construed into persecution, that led to the building of a Methodist meeting-house ; and this to a protracted meeting of twenty-one days. I wish I could give you *viva voce*, all the particulars of that meeting. At first, it was proposed by them, to have the meeting the first week at their house, and the next at the old meeting-house on the hill. Rev. Mr. Babcock was wise enough to say neither yea nor nay to this proposal ; but preached for them one day. At the end of the week, it was feared by them, that if the place of the meeting was changed, the Holy Spirit might be grieved and the attention of sinners turned off from themselves and their salvation. This, avoiding the change, was just what Mr. Babcock wished. Suffice it to say, that converts were multiplied as the drops of the morning dew. All the while the preachers were saying, " Dear sister and dear brother, we don't care what church you join ; all we want is to have your dear precious souls saved. But, dear sister, had you not better join the class ? It does not mean anything, only a pledge, on our

part, to help you on in your way to heaven. It does not bind you at all." Thus, as fast as any expressed hope, their names were entered on the class-book. But that which showed the proselyting, or, nearer the truth, the Jesuitical spirit of Methodism, was the giving secretly to young converts from Congregational families, a little book, whose proper title would have been "A Burlesque of Calvinism." So great was the interest at one time, that many good Congregationalists began to think that they had no religion — that all the religion and all the brotherly love was with the Methodists.

The bubble exploded on this wise. The current set so strongly in favor of Methodism, that all restraints were removed. The feeling was, that the whole ground had been secured: so that now the shoutings of Glory! glory! began to be startling. Sober fathers and mothers, who had been through revivals under Dr. Burton, began to ask, What is to be the end of these things? Morning prayer-meetings had been continued for nineteen mornings in succession; and sons and daughters especially began to look weary and wild with excitement. One Friday night the daughters of a staid and considerate Congregational mother came home singing and joyous, at

almost midnight. The mother told them they must not go to the prayer-meeting the next morning, for they were already so worn out and excited, that they did not know what they were about. They wept, and begged to go once more, for that was to be the great meeting of the series. She consented, but charged them not to be late home to their breakfast. They were late, and it was of God that they were ; for, contrary to her usual custom, the mother made the daughters' bed. And what of that ? Why, this : Down deep in the straw, at the foot of the straw bed, she found a little book, which had been privately given to the daughters, and given too, with the charge by no means to let their parents know they had it. She had had time enough to look it over, and read enough to make her feel indignant. The breakfast was eaten in silence ; for the daughters, seeing that the bed was made, suspected that their strange bed-fellow had been detected. After breakfast, with the family Bible open before them, the girls were questioned as to whether they had joined the class, and why that book was hid away in the straw bed. They wept, and said they had promised not to tell. But the father told them, that he could never again pray with them or for them, unless, before God,

they would tell the whole truth. He assured them that true religion required no such secrecy. After many tears they owned up. One of the elders, they said, had given nearly all the converts such a book, and with the same solemn charge of privacy. He told them they did not know what awful things Calvinist ministers believed, neither did their parents know, nor would they believe it if they were told; it was of the greatest importance to them, as dear young converts, to set out right; they must hide the book where their father and mother could not find it. They told him they did not know where they could hide it from them. "Does your mother ever make your bed?" he asked. "No." "Well, then you can hide it in your straw bed, and read it when they are not at home." This fact was at once communicated to Mr. Babcock. The girls were at their own meeting on the Sabbath. The finishing touch was as follows: — As it was to be the last great day of the feast, the preaching was awfully solemn. The evening was devoted chiefly to telling of — O how happy the converts were — to singing, Glory! glory! and to prayer. The meeting was also to be continued till midnight. Feeling was exalted to the utmost. An elder was praying with all his might and main, when a very lively girl, belong-

ing to a good family, became so excited, that she began to cry out for joy, and in transports, jumping and clapping her hands, shouting, "Glory!" "Bless the Lord, for the happiness my soul feels!" "Pray on, brother! pray on!" Then whirling round, she threw her arms about the elder's neck, and began to kiss him most fervently. Was it a holy kiss (?) Be it holy or not, it was too much. Females began to seek the cool night air. The meeting soon broke up. The poor girl's excessive joy was changed to shame and tears. Each sought the quiet of home, to ponder on what their eyes had seen, and their ears had heard. In the mean time, Mr. Babcock had been to Hanover, and secured the aid of President Lord and Professor Haddock, to preach two days each, the ensuing week, provided hearers could be drawn to the old meeting-house. Notice was given on the Sabbath, that one or the other would preach Tuesday afternoon and evening, a prayer-meeting in the morning. The subjects were to be, the first day, on "the nature, necessity, and evidences of evangelical repentance;" secondly, "the nature, necessity, and evidences of regeneration by the Holy Spirit;" thirdly, "the nature and fruits of saving faith;" fourthly, "the necessity and importance of the

doctrines of the gospel, in order to the stability of Christian character." These meetings were continued four days, and were fully attended. The contrast between the two kinds of preaching was so obvious to all, as to be followed with the most gratifying results. They said, "How clear he makes everything." One would say to another, "I did not know anything before. Every thing lay in confusion in the mind. I felt, but could not tell why or how I felt; but now, I can see why I ought to have such and such feelings. I can see just what repentance is — what regeneration is — what faith is. I have learned more in these four days than I could have learned in six months from the preaching we have had at the Methodist house." The result was, that from fifty to sixty of the children of the church whose names had been secretly entered upon the class-book, were saved and united with the old church. But the Methodists were exceedingly offended and chagrined on account of the loss to them. True, their church received quite a large accession: but many of them have since lived as they have lived. The last time I was in Thetford, I asked a good man what, on the whole, had been the effects of Methodism. His answer was — "The sanctity of the Sabbath has been greatly lowered; we never

had groups of men and boys gathered around bridges and under the awnings of stairs, or walking the fields, till since the Methodists brought in another kind of religion into the town; but we have a plenty of such groups now." So much for Thetford.

My first attempt at school-keeping was in Canaan, N. H., in a Methodist neighborhood. It was a curiosity to see how many times some had been converted. The system seems to require that every new preacher should have a revival, and this leads to extravagant measures to produce an excitement. I well remember a remark of an old Methodist lady. I was quoting passages of Scripture in proof of the doctrine of election. She said, "I know that election is taught in the Bible, but I wont believe it; I had rather, and an elder says he had a thousand times rather my children and friends would become Universalists, than believe such a horrible doctrine." And does not this account for the fact that so many of their supposed converts become Universalists? The greatest, or at least one of the greatest obstacles I meet with in my present field, is the number of Methodists and Christigan backsliders.

I may possibly have erred, as to the order of

time in which some of the events narrated above occurred. I cannot, as to the substance of the facts themselves.

Yours for the truth as it is in Christ.

The following lines are an extract of a letter on business, written without a thought of their being published. They came from one whose opportunities for observation of the field in Vermont are second to those of no other, and whose name would command universal confidence, were it proper in the circumstances to give it.

LETTER VII.

I rejoice that you have spoken out plainly and faithfully as you have. The effects of the Methodists' operations in this State have been very similar to what you represent them to have been in Lynn. The conviction has long since been forced upon my mind, that they have been productive of immense evil, particularly by prejudicing multitudes against the truth, multiplying spurious conversions, bringing revivals of religion and religion itself into contempt, and leading thousands to regard religious experience as a delusion. I hope your book may have a wide circulation, and do much to awaken attention to the evils which you so justly and truly describe.

In haste, yours very truly.

The following is an extract of a letter from a minister in Wisconsin, who in point of judgment, and all valuable qualities of a minister, is second to no other. It was a casual remark made in a letter ordering one of the books.

LETTER VIII.

“I think such people as ministers in the West, have a right to all the help which they can get from such a source; as the Methodists here often do us vast harm. And if I can learn any thing useful on the subject, I ought to do it. Most of the leading infidels of this region, were once Methodist church members. If it were worth the while, I could tell you some amusing as well as horrible facts respecting them.”

LETTER IX.

{ PATCH GROVE, WISCONSIN,
{ August 21, 1855.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—

I may not add to the *character* of the facts in your possession, but I will to the number of them.

A man fifty or sixty years of age told me, that

he never had religion but once in his life, and then he felt nothing of it the next morning.

A good lady being at the house of a class-leader here, inquired for a Bible. But his wife replied, that they had none! as Bibles could easily be bought in the neighborhood, they must have had none, because they had no use, or care for any.

A credible lady informed me, that she attended a Methodist meeting in her neighborhood, in which a young man went forward to be prayed for at the request of some of his friends. He said he had no feeling about religion, but would go to oblige them. The preacher called upon several of the most noisy members, to come around the young man and pray. He led the way, and they all prayed, with their voices in concert, or rather confusion for some time. At length the young man grew weary of such speaking. Then putting his handkerchief upon his mouth, he joined in the noise with a bow-ow-ow-ow! Is it not "horrible" to call such doings prayer? Of course, the young man was disgusted at such an attempt to convert him. And his state was made more dangerous than before.

A youth, who had a short time been numbered among the converts in a Methodist excitement,

inquired of me what he should do. He said he did not really feel as he professed. He thought at one time, that his feelings were changed ; then he was immediately called a brother, and he wanted to appear to be as great a Christian as any of them. So he professed to be very happy, and prayed with much appearance of fervency ; but he did not feel what he uttered. Thus by the dealings of Methodists with him, he was urged on to false professions and to mocking God with pretended prayers. In a few weeks, his Methodist minister said he was worse than before, and now he has long been an infidel.

A venerable Baptist brother told me, that before I came here, a Methodist minister took his gun and went out hunting on the Sabbath, and shot a deer. He also told me of attending a meeting at which the Methodists numbered some twelve or fifteen converts ; but not one of them gave evidence of real conversion. One of them said "he believed religion was a good thing ; at any rate, he was determined to try it for six months !"

In another neighborhood, I attended their meeting one evening, when a minister said publicly, that they counted about twelve converts. In six

weeks there were not more than four of them left, and now not more than two.

But enough of this. Praying that you may be led and helped to do much good in your undertaking.

I am yours truly,

IRA TRACY.

REV. P. COOKE, D. D.

The following is also from a missionary in Wisconsin:—

LETTER X.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—

The following remarks and facts are at your disposal for your forthcoming work.

It is a notorious fact, that nearly all the leading infidels in this region, have been professors of religion, and most of them in the Methodist connection, and this region is noted for its infidelity.

One of the ways in which Methodism has done harm here, has been by the employment of unfit men for ministers. Soon after I came here, I called on one of the early settlers, a prominent man in society and a physician. He cherished sceptical views — was provoked that such illiterate men were sent here — men that murdered the king's English so horribly. He was rarely seen at a religious meeting. He seemed to be in

this state in consequence of the unfitness of the Methodist ministers. He attended my meetings, headed a subscription towards my salary, and both he and his wife are now members of the church.

One of the ministers, much lauded among the Methodists, lived a notoriously unchristian life. He was passionate in public and private, not careful to speak the truth, and indecent in his talk. For example, some young men coming into his singing school, found the seats all occupied. He requested them, as they were standing up, to take seats. One replied, that he would be very glad to take a seat, if he would show him one. He answered — “You may sit on the floor if your pants are clean.” This is but a specimen of his insulting, trifling, threatening, foolish remarks, which were often heard from him in his schools. But never was a word heard from him, adapted to make any religious impression, much less a prayer.

Another Methodist minister here boasted much of his learning ; but made shameful exhibitions of his ignorance. For instance, preaching at the funeral of a child, he took for his text — “Suffer little children,” &c. He proceeded to speak of the commonness of suffering, even among children

— giving the text the meaning of “ Little children, suffer that you may come to me.”

Another was not regarded as an honest man by some of his former acquaintances here, and while a circuit preacher and professing to have money at interest, he permitted his wife to buy a note of his, which ought to have been worth thirty dollars, for ten, the man holding his note choosing to take that in preference to his chance of getting from his honesty the full value.

The majority of Methodist ministers on this circuit, since I came here, have failed to gain the reputation of respectability. The want of knowledge, or of common sense, or honesty, or propriety of conduct, has prevented. As might be expected, a large portion of the people connected with them are persons of loose lives. One leading man among them is notorious for his love of repeating other people's profanity, and little confidence is felt in his honesty. Another prominent member told me, that he had no family worship, and his neighbors tell me, that they have seen him abroad with his gun on the Sabbath. A few weeks ago, a non-professing neighbor went with all his family to visit him on the Sabbath at his house, and found that his family were on the point of starting to visit them.

The Methodists here have held exciting meetings now and then, when considerable numbers have joined them. But the effects have been such, that after a few months the tendency has been to cause religion to be despised and disbelieved. In view of such and so many misrepresentations of religion, chiefly by the Methodists, a brother remarked — “I do not wonder that many of the people have become infidels.”

Their belief and practice tend to impart looseness and confusion of views on doctrines, to persons of other denominations, and to lead them into unchristian conduct. From the frequent hearing of Methodist doctrines, there comes a confusion of views about what conversion is, and an uncertainty about the perseverance of Christians. The looseness in doctrine connected with this system produces looseness of life.

I have repeatedly remarked in confidential conversation with friends, that I was very doubtful whether we ought to rejoice at the progress of Methodism. *If my eternal destiny hung on the salvation of half of the people of a new settlement, and I had to decide whether a Methodist minister should go to labor among them or none, I should hesitate.* I think, if I could be assured that a good minister would come in five or seven

years, I would say — “ Let not this field be burnt over with Methodist excitements, nor swept with the curse of false doctrine. Let it rather remain without any pretence of religion, till the truth shall be presented in connection with a consistent life and conduct.”

I suppose the Methodists do much good in some places ; I have no doubt of their having been the means of saving individuals in our new settlements at the West. But they lead great numbers to cherish false hopes and make false professions, and consequently become infidels or atheists. Whether, on the whole, they do more good or harm, I regard as a question too doubtful to be answered very confidently. I am sure that it is to a dreadful extent a corrupting system, producing false hopes in individuals, and false views of religion in communities.

The facts which I have stated occurred on my own field of labor. I have heard of many crooked things alleged to have been done in other places ; but I have not thought best to relate them. There have been times, when it seemed that a right course taken by the ministers, would have led to a genuine revival. But in such cases, the Methodists are apt to manage so as to get the ear of the more ignorant people, and so proceed

as to dissipate what convictions exist. So it has been in other places. In ———, there was a very interesting revival, and a Methodist minister told a Congregational brother, that he would see strange things at the meeting that night. Accordingly, when his chosen time for it came, he seemed to go into a trance. He appeared not to be able to speak ; but when it was proposed that the Congregational minister should preach, he mumbled out a prohibition. A prominent lawyer standing by, and observing his actions said, he believed he was “ playing possum.” From that time the revival declined.

When I was preaching in another State, a Methodist preacher informed me that a stranger would preach at his house at a certain time. I attended. The stranger took for his text the story of Samson’s foxes. He said — “ I do not very often look into a dictionary, but I did once, and I found that one meaning of *tale*, is something told. So when it is said Samson turned tail to tail, it means that ministers should not tell different stories, but put them together so that they will all agree.” And the firebrands, he said, represented the Holy Spirit, which descended on the Apostles.

Yours truly.

LETTER XI.

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, Newburgh, N. Y., Sept. 3, 1855.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—

I have just finished the perusal of your "Centuries," and though I have not the pleasure of being personally acquainted with you, I cannot deny myself the gratification of sending you a line to thank you for the very seasonable production.

The entire volume is full of interest; but the chapters in which you discuss the character of Methodism, I regard as particularly valuable. If you had not so long lived in a hornet's nest, I should from the bottom of my soul pity you. But by this time you must be well used to the stings of that sort of insect. My own observation of the workings of Methodism here and elsewhere has brought me very much to the same conclusions to which you have come. Among the Methodists in this town, there are many for whom I feel a warm regard, as sincere followers of our common Saviour. But the most noisy Methodists are by no means regarded as being the most exemplary Christians. In this old-fashioned town, Presbyterianism has always been the predominant faith, while the mass of the population has never been much given to change. Of a Sabbath evening

the steadiest Presbyterians will occasionally drop in to hear our Methodist friends. And this probably is the reason they so rarely advert to the horrible doctrine of "decrees," and "the pavement of infants' skulls," &c. Indeed, I have heard the precious truths of *the saints' perseverance* presented with quite as much distinctness as I should perhaps use myself, unless I were formally discussing the subject. So far our Methodism differs from yours in Lynn. [Not at all. Our correspondent must have slightly read what we said about Methodist preaching adjusting its doctrines to its hearers. This is a striking confirmation of what we said.—THE AUTHOR.] But in a home missionary point of view, ours and yours are identical. The history of Swampscott *nomine mutato*, is exactly the history of sundry localities in this vicinity. Two years ago we had a union prayer meeting, and in connection with it a striking illustration of Methodist catholicity. Serious as the subject was, I may even say that in certain respects the thing was absolutely comical.

During my residence at Princeton as a professor in the college, we had a development of Methodism, especially on the side of its intense sectarianism. There was not a Methodist in the

borough, and no more need for such a church than for the fifth wheel to a coach. But there was a movement for a second Presbyterian church, which as usual was a little too slow. The instant the Methodists in the adjoining town heard of it, they resolved to get a foothold in that famous seat of Presbyterianism. While our friends were talking, they built their meeting-house. But I must have done.

Let me only add, that I am looking impatiently for the second series, which I learn from the Recorder is in press. I bless the Lord for what he has enabled you to do in Lynn. And my prayer is, that he will spare you long, and bless your labors yet more abundantly.

Believe me, very affectionately,

JOHN FORSYTH.

REV. PARSONS COOKE, D. D.

The following letter is from one who has been with the Methodists for many years a local preacher, and for some time a travelling preacher, but who is now in good standing in a Congregational church. He is a native of England, and was once connected with the English Methodists. But he is not one of the English Methodist ministers, from whom we have derived materials

for other parts of this work. It is worthy of note how all of this class dwell on the great difference between American and English Methodism. And this difference is effectually shown in the great numbers of English Methodists who, after coming to this country, have refused to join the M. E. Church. This is a result not to have been expected, since, while strangers in a new country, their very aspirations for home would attract them more to Methodism, if they could make themselves at home in it; that is, if it was like the Methodism in which they were reared. If our correspondent is correct in what he says of the numbers in a position similar to his own, this is a very important fact. English Methodism, it seems, has too much of the offensive peculiarities of Methodism to be successful in England, and for this cause it is rapidly declining. But when its members come to this country, they find these peculiarities to be so much greater as to be intolerable to them.

LETTER XII.

Rev. and Dear Sir :—

Methodism, by its friends, is considered as a peculiar child of Providence, destined “to spread Scriptural holiness over these lands.” But if

that is its destiny, it has woefully failed of accomplishing it. The limits of this letter will allow of my presenting only a few of the facts which have induced this conviction. Mr. Wise denies that there is any material difference between English and American Methodists. I have no hesitation in saying, that within the circle of ten miles from Boston, at least a hundred intelligent and credible witnesses can be found, who, after an extensive experience and observation of Methodism here and in England, will testify that there is *a very essential difference*. The English Wesleyan ministry know how to preach the *doctrines* of Christianity, and do preach them, and enforce them with becoming plainness. Nor does a fear of a loss of salary prevent their enforcing the moral and religious duties of Christianity. There are serious defects in English Wesleyan Methodism, but it has this advantage over the American: — In the M. E. Church here it rarely happens that a thorough doctrinal sermon is heard, except it be from one of the distinguished preachers. And one reason why such sermons are not heard is, that the ministers are *incompetent* to preach them. During the last fourteen years, I have never heard a discourse in a Methodist church on Divine Providence, and very rarely anything bor-

dering upon the *nature* of the new birth. But often enough have I heard sermons on *Christian perfection*, and in some cases a series of them, extending through four or five weeks. Not long ago, I heard one of their first-class preachers declare, that no moral change takes place in a person at the time when he is justified—intimating that *perfection* is indispensable to any moral change in a sinner. A few years ago, a young man, a graduate of a university, was a candidate for the ministry; the presiding minister propounded a few questions, and then gave leave to any brother to propose any questions. The candidate was then asked to quote a text that would sustain the doctrine of justification by faith, but he could not do it.

When reading in the papers what is said of the fraternal relations existing between English and American Methodists, the thought of the difference between the two bodies has forced itself upon my mind. The English Wesleyan ministry is a high-minded and respectable body of men, second to none in ability, except the Independents, which denomination on all hands is allowed, in proportion to numbers, to excel in pulpit talents and theological learning. But here the Methodist ministry is to a great extent composed

of men, not only deficient in piety, but also *in moral principle* — an instance or two of which we will give in the sequel. As to their generosity and high-mindedness, it may sometimes appear in *patronizing* a poor brother, when an end is to be served by it. But let a rich member of the church, who is liberal towards the ministry, intimate dissatisfaction with some movement in the church, or with some act of the minister — no matter how right or important the act may have been, — the minister's dignity disappears in the spaniel that has displeased his master.

The pulpit qualifications of the Methodist ministry are very meagre. Their itinerancy is a vast advantage, and an absolute necessity to them. By reason of it, a hundred or a hundred and fifty sermons become a sufficient capital for life. But it is with the greatest difficulty that many of the preachers make that attainment. We have heard a preacher give the same sermon in the same pulpit twice within two months. We have heard another preach the same sermon, three times in the same pulpit, within nine months, and he had then been fifteen or twenty years in the itinerancy; and had exchanged about every third Sabbath; and yet with this advantage their performances in the general are decidedly inferior.

This comes in part from the ease with which men get into the Methodist ministry. We have known instances of persons, after trial in other denominations, finding themselves incompetent to sustain themselves as settled pastors, going into the Methodist ministry, for the advantage of the itinerancy.

While the American Methodists differ so much from the English Wesleyans, there are strong points of resemblance between them and the English *Primitive Methodists*, otherwise called the Ranters. Our Methodists are fond of noise and excitement; so are the Ranters. Our Methodists are lax in doctrine and morals; so are the Ranters. Our Methodists are not scrupulous about ministerial qualifications; neither are the Ranters. Ours have camp meetings; so do they. Ours are fond of a display of numerical increase; so are they. The one seems to have copied from the other.

I will here give an instance of that deficiency of moral principle in ministers, which I have affirmed to be very common in the Methodist ministry. A minister's health had failed, and his church found it needful to call in the labor of another minister for the time. The minister called in was studying at the Methodist Theological

Seminary. He had exhausted his materials, and had gone thither to replenish his stock. He engaged to supply this pulpit meanwhile for a stipulated sum. When his time expired, he called at the house of the church steward to receive payment. The steward, having ascertained what was due, stated the sum, and laid down the money as he supposed to the amount due. Being in haste to depart on some business, he busied himself in his preparations, while the minister was counting his money over again. Having counted it to his satisfaction, he inquired of the steward if it was right, who said he supposed it was. He then counted it again, and made the same inquiry, which was answered as before. As the steward was about leaving the house, the minister inquired again if it was all right. He replied that he now had not time to attend to the business further ; but if it was not right, he would make it right. The steward afterwards discovered that he had paid him considerably more than was his due, and wrote to him to refund what had been overpaid ; at the same time wishing him to take into consideration the burdened state of the society, paying two ministers, besides the payment of still another, called in at his request, to get up a revival — who had done most of the

preaching for several weeks, and had been roundly paid at the end. But not a cent was returned. The reply was, that in view of the great amount of good which he had done the people, he was entitled to the whole!!!

Another case illustrates a want of moral principle in both minister and people. A member and officer in a Methodist church, a lawyer by profession as well as a farmer, had been occasionally complained of to the pastor for immoral conduct. Finally formal charges were preferred against him, according to the discipline — charges of fraud, of profaneness, of Sabbath breaking, and of refusing to pay for labor according to agreement. The minister turned every possible way to avoid acting on the charges; but the complainant insisted, and the minister was obliged to select a committee to try the case. On some of the specifications the accused pleaded guilty; the others were proved by overwhelming evidence. Under the charge of fraud, it was proved that he had defrauded a poor widow, having a family of children, out of five hundred dollars. Yet with these charges fully sustained by evidence, the action of the committee was in this form: "Voted, That brother —— be retained in the church." And the pastor approved of this action. The com-

mittee's business was to decide whether the accused was innocent or guilty. But instead of this, their vote said, — innocent or guilty, he must be retained in the church. The reason of this was, the said brother was paying \$75 towards repairing the meeting-house, and paying liberally towards the preacher's salary. The committee who acted as the jury in the case, were themselves in a habit of working on the Sabbath, and another had been guilty of profaneness; and they could not condemn the accused without condemning themselves. It afterwards came out that the committee had decided before the trial, what judgment to give. The result was, that in that neighborhood Methodists and Methodism became a hissing and a by-word; and the accused became the subject of many laughable caricatures.

These are not solitary instances, but are taken from memory, as specimens of many others. We could fill a volume with others of a like nature. Sickening as is the view of lax morals so prevalent in the Methodist church, it is more so when taken in connection with the notion very prevalent there, that a revival or a camp-meeting excitement will atone for such indiscretions.

But the atonement is of a nature to aggravate

the evil. To say nothing of the evils resulting from so many spurious conversions, and such hosts of backsliders, and the influence which they exert on the common mind, the revival scenes themselves are fruitful in disgrace brought upon religion. Thousands of young people are collected by the mere fact of the excitement. It is proclaimed that the Holy Spirit is at work, that the fire is spreading, that blessings are coming in copious showers. The minister gets into a ferment of passion to stir up the brethren and sisters, and to alarm the ungodly, and "give them a shaking over the pit." Suddenly he makes a pause. He now sends his runners through the audience, to hunt up the penitents, and bring them up to the altar. If these are not successful enough he goes himself. And he intends to do it effectually. I will give a case in point which occurred within my own knowledge. A preacher of eccentric habits and rare tact in Methodist revivals was touring in New England. Intelligence came to the town of — that he intended to alight there. On the Sabbath an appointment was made for him for an evening in the week. He came and preached. After the sermon was finished the usual formalities for gathering in the converts took place. He sent out the brethren to get them to the altar.

But somehow the sinners were rather loth to come at that time. So away he started himself, and fixing his eye upon a young man of robust appearance, he commenced talking with him while the brethren and sisters were singing. His eloquence failed, for the young man would not move an inch. He then seized him by the collar and dragged him from his seat, and then threw him on the floor. The preacher was a large athletic man. The young man not relishing that way of getting religion began to rebel; and it is doubtful whether the preacher would have left the house with as fair a countenance as he had when he entered it, if the brethren had not interfered. Of course there were no conversions that night.

As to class meetings, they might under a proper regimen be made spiritually profitable. But in order to that, they must needs have pious and discreet men for leaders, which they rarely do have. Indeed such qualifications usually are not sought by the preachers appointing them. The first requisite is that the leader shall be a pliant tool of the preacher, and promote the interests of the priesthood at all hazards. Sometimes the office is given as a reward for some service done to the preacher. A man of wealth and influence, if subservient to the preacher, is sure to have the office,

if he is willing to take it. But an out-spoken, honest, independent man, even if he have superior talents, rarely becomes a class leader.

After all shrewdness and vigilance in making the appointments, the ministers are not always without jealousy of the dear brethren of their own choice. This is manifest in a frequent "changing of leaders." This is done often in total disregard of the wishes of the class, which is frequently robbed of a favorite leader to have one put over them who is specially offensive to them. We once joined a class which a few weeks before had appointed over it for a leader, a young man of great loquacity and little sense, and withal a Universalist, denying totally any future punishment, and taking no pains to conceal his denial. He some time after applied for a local preacher's license, and he failed of obtaining it, not on the ground of his known Universalism, but because his trial sermon was a failure.

As to the *modus operandi* in class meetings, in nineteen-twentieths of cases, it is a repetition of the same old sing-song story, handed down from father to son, and destined to be handed down as long as Methodism lasts. Let a stranger who never saw a railroad come to see and hear all the movements upon one, he will for a while be deeply

interested in what he sees and hears, but soon it becomes to him the same everlasting whirl and puff, puff, puff. Something of the same kind is experienced here.

As to love-feasts, I know of no good end which they accomplish, except as they become convenient occasions for raising the presiding elder's salary — a thing so odious to the Methodist people generally. This burden is laid on the preachers, and they must carry it by hook or by crook. For the presiding elder has their destiny in his hands.

As to Methodist boasting of numbers, which is so proverbial, for the sake of argument allow what is claimed; but remember that effective force is not always according to numerical force. How many effeminate, cowardly, popish Mexicans would it take to vanquish a regiment of well-trained Anglo-Saxons?

What force can a body of Methodists, however large, with their sickly, enervate religion, exert against the hosts that meet us in the Christian warfare? Who but the stanch Puritans would have stood the shocks which they endured? The weapons of their warfare were not carnal. They were the doctrines of the cross, preached, believed and lived. After all defections from them

the same faith maintains its force to the present day; and those holding this faith are no more disposed to turn to every breeze, than were their forefathers. Their object is not so much to gather great numbers into the church, as to increase the amount of pure religion. But as to the real worth of Puritans and Puritanism, in past ages or the present, Methodists generally have no idea. They are taught to believe that Puritanism is opposed to Methodism, and that is cause enough for their hating it.

The following letter from a minister came in connection with an order for a book, without any expectation of its publication.

LETTER XIII.

Rev. and Dear Sir:—

I want the book to read and to loan to others. I see the fruits of Arminianism around me. This is a new place. The first settlers were Arminians of the Freewill Baptist order. This and Methodism have exerted the leading religious influence until recently. Orthodox Congregationalism is now beginning to have some influence. The fruit of these isms is a large growth of infidelity, under the name of Universalism. Old School Ortho-

doxy is not much liked by the community in general. I have found here among the Methodists some that give evidence of regeneration. Those of this class, however, after being instructed in the doctrines of grace, have found it to be their duty and privilege to change their church relations. I fear there are but very few among the Methodists and Freewill Baptists here, that have been born again. They get up revivals, so-called — make converts — proclaim additions. They boast of their numbers, and are now beginning to boast of their wealth. Some well-meaning ones, believing what they say, do not see but that Methodism — being an easier religion — will do as well as anything else. I think your book here may be turned to good account, for the people are beginning to see a contrast between the workings of Methodism and Calvinism.

I have witnessed several Methodist and Freewill Baptist revivals. When they can “get up” excitement enough, they can make converts fast and easy; and accounts of the revival are published with the numbers of converts. Then their doctrine of falling from grace is very convenient. For soon the greater part of the converts have fallen off, and many have become infidels, and say that they know there is nothing in religion,

for they have tried it. Others remain in a back-slidden state till another state of excitement, when they *resolve* again to serve God. This class of people generally contrive to get converted again before they die, and to be reported as having died in the converted state. I apprehend that if our Methodist friends had on their minutes only those that for the time being regarded themselves as Christians, their numbers would be greatly lessened. *I do not now know of one Methodist family in this place, where Methodism so abounds, in which family prayer is regularly maintained.* Their contributions to benevolent objects are very meagre. You know more about them than I do. But Methodism is Methodism everywhere — with here and there a consistent Christian (at heart Orthodox) scattered through the mass.

LETTER XIV.

Rev. Dr. Cooke : —

Dear Sir, — I have taken my pen to state some facts about Methodist revivals, which may aid in estimating the proportion of those which fall away. I was not an eye-witness to the first which I shall refer to, which was in Stanstead, in Canada East. I had it from the lips of a Methodist preacher. He was speaking to me of the great power and

influence of the main actor in that drama (John Swazey). I know him well, and the pernicious influence which he has exerted in other places. He referred to the so-called revival in Stanstead, and said that there were seventy-five converts. Some time afterwards, I inquired of him how many of those converts held out, assuming, as a matter of course, that all did not. He thought a moment, and then answered, that he believed that *not one of them did*. I had the same information from a young man whose family resides in Stanstead, and who was there at the time of the excitement.

The second occurred in a place in this vicinity, where I was holding stated lectures. There suddenly came in three or four Methodist preachers and took the ground. I quietly retired. They proclaimed thirty-seven converts, with one or two backsliders reclaimed. With these persons I was more or less acquainted. I knew them before this, and have known them since. Two only of these, according to their own reckoning, have held out, and these two give to me no evidence of regeneration. They were rather sedate and moral before their conversion, and they (unlike some others) remain so.

The other scene was in this village. We have

a union meeting-house, so called. A revival was got up, and the Methodists were making converts fast. I went in sometimes, and was asked to pray occasionally. About twenty converts had been counted, when it came our turn to occupy the pulpit. My text was, "No man can come to me, except the Father draw him." The sermon consisted very much of passages of Scripture, without note or comment. The converts said, "If that be true, I am not a Christian." The word of God tried them, and I think that they came to a just conclusion. Not one of the twenty remained. The actors thought that we committed a horrible sin, in thus opening the Word of God upon their delusions. But by the grace of God we yet live.

These are a few out of the many like instances. I could name others. In Elmore, Vt., there were one hundred converts, and not one held out. I wish you could have a history of a Methodist farce in Northfield, New Hampshire.

Yours for the old paths.

A Presbyterian minister, in a business letter, says: —

LETTER XV.

We need something of the kind to put into the hands of our people, who are continually tam-

pered with and teased by the Methodists. They are building their churches under the eaves of every Calvinistic church in all this region, begging a large part of the money from Orthodox people, and then perverting every one that they possibly can. In my small village, they absolutely had not material enough to make a trusteeship to hold their property (it only required five) until they persuaded two pew-holders of my congregation to act for them. They came on their knees, brothering me, and sistering our church, in the most affectionate manner. At the dedication of their church, they actually made me a life-member of it. After sucking all the blood they possibly could out of my people, they took advantage of those who were weak enough not to see the trick, to drain them further, on the assumption of my popularity, and through the plausibility of *Christian union*. And yet the same man who did this, had but a few months before, in a neighboring Presbyterian congregation, said that we Presbyterians held damnable doctrines, and had advised children of Presbyterian parents to absent themselves from the church of their fathers, and to leave its Sabbath school. Here it is all brother, brother, love, and union. Such hypocrisy I cannot endure.

Yours in the gospel.

DEDUCTIONS FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE.

If any have misgivings at the position which I have taken, that Methodism, though it has the concurrence of many good men, and does many good things, is, on the whole, an evil and a corrupt institution, they may have the consolation of knowing that it is exactly a reciprocating of the courtesy of Methodism. The case reported about Thetford, of the Methodist bishop calling that "Satan's Seat," because Calvinism was strongly entrenched there, is in harmony, not always with the open professions, but with the actual policy and practice of Methodists, in their assaults on the Calvinistic churches. It is well known that Methodism has more satisfaction in breaking up a Calvinistic church, than if it were a Universalist or an Infidel combination. There is no greater distance from us to Methodism, than there is from Methodism to us. If the Methodists estimate the difference between the two systems, as that between light and darkness, that between God and Satan, they cannot complain if we admit what they assert, and say, that if Calvinism is according to the gospel of Christ, Methodism, in its main tendencies, is opposite to it. A thousand witnesses will be ready with instances in which,

by word and deed, Methodists have declared the same sentiment as to Calvinism, which is reported in the letter concerning Thetford. It is not to be disguised, that while many individual Methodists, whose hearts are better than the prevailing spirit of their system, avow and cherish charitable feelings towards Christians who adhere to the doctrines of grace, the ruling intent and spirit of Methodism are the opposite of this. The main drift of Methodist preaching, and of the controversial efforts of Methodist periodicals, shows that Infidelity and Universalism are less resisted by them than are those doctrines which stand out so clearly on the pages written by Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. And while these things are so, Calvinists may, if they will, adhere to the delusion that this is a body of our fellow Christians to be aided and treated as Christians in all their enterprises. But, sooner or later, they will find it a delusion. After having presented such reasons as I have, I shall ask no man's pardon for regarding the Methodist machine as one of the most effectual causes that are now at work in this land against the gospel of Christ.

The letter which stands first in the series gives a picture which presents the true attitude of Methodism in relation to our work of building up the

new or feeble churches. It is content to do little or nothing on the ground where we are doing little or nothing. But if a minister of ours is sent to an unoccupied field, then a Methodist agency is put in and plied with zeal and vigor, with the combined aid of Universalists and Infidels, till our efforts for upbuilding are thwarted; and when that is done, the Methodist forces are withdrawn, for their object is accomplished: irreligion and heathenism have again the ascendancy, and Methodism is satisfied. The same policy is illustrated in the second letter.

Now here is a position where Methodism is most effectually hindering the evangelizing of our own country. If all our towns and villages are ever to be brought under the full and steady action of a preached gospel, the result is to be secured by the nurture of new and feeble churches. Whatever hinders us in this work most directly hinders our spreading gospel institutions over the land. And who does not know that the greatest obstacle, the everywhere present obstacle to our doing this is, that Methodism is on the field, not usually in sufficient force to sustain its own institutions, but with force and tact sufficient to prevent or greatly hinder the labor of our ministers. If this is not the greatest difficulty with which

our home missionary work has to struggle, then all my observation of it has been in vain. It is then too much to ask us to admit that this system deserves great credit for what it does in the new and waste places.

The letters above referred to also illustrate the use which Methodism makes of its few families scattered here and there in Congregational societies. True to its principle, that such societies are "Satan's seat," and to be assailed by all means that may promise success, it is sure to make the most of such families for the purpose. From the case in Thetford, it appears that the casual entrance of such families is not always as fortuitous as it may seem. The bishop is presented planning with his elders; and a part of the plan is, when a field wholly overrun with Calvinism is to be assailed, and there are not in it the ten that are needful to save a Sodom, to put them there. Here and there a family must be sent forward as pioneers. Now we know from actual results what are the previous plans. But it matters little what the plans are, if the results be so. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. The safety of those congregations which have in them here and there a Methodist family, in regions where organized Methodism is unknown, is to consider

them as missionary families sent thither to scatter the first seeds of division and strife; and if they are especially and extravagantly loving and Catholic in their words, the more care will be needed to guard against their divisive influence. It may be that they have not a thought of commencing an attack, or of laying a train in preparation for it, yet the multiplied instances in which such things have been done should put us on our guard, and our vigilance will be no injury to the innocent.

Our correspondents throw some light on the results of union operations between Calvinists and Methodists. In my first book I remarked that Methodists were in favor of unions with other sects for promoting Methodism; but not for promoting Christianity. The narrative in Letter II is to this point: A meeting-house was held in partnership by the two bodies. The Congregational minister proposed to unite with the Methodist minister in a series of meetings. But he doubted whether that would promote Methodism, and so refused, and then commenced his series of meetings alone. But from the people's refusing to attend, he changed his mind and invited the Congregational minister to join him, which he did. And even then the work must be

conducted only in the Methodist way and to Methodist results. This thing was even more strikingly illustrated in Thetford, where the minister was allowed to propose his own terms, and take his own way of conducting a union meeting into a Methodist meeting. After the whole amount of experience had of unions between Methodists and Congregationalists, one must have more than the simplicity of the gospel to trust himself and his cause to them.

Another point on which our correspondence gives instruction is, that of the views of Methodist ministers themselves, as to the spuriousness of their conversions. That instance of a Methodist minister consoling himself in the loss of his numerous converts which had joined the Freewill Baptist Church, in that "six months would use them up," is instructive. After so much experience as they have had of the blight of their blossoms, we infer that they cannot be ignorant that the work which they do on so many is not a work of conversion. When in millions of instances they have seen that backsliding is the rule, and perseverance is the exception, they must know that when they cause those under their instruction in such cases to believe that they are converted, they cause them to believe what they themselves do not believe. Could

it have been otherwise with that minister, who said of his own converts, "six months will use them up?" And in what respects does his case differ from that of others, who in the same way number off scores and hundreds of converts?

The *unity* of *Methodism* — the fact that the operations and spirit of the thing are the same in all places — is fully confirmed in this correspondence. What Mr. Palmer says about Putney, corresponding in its Methodist history with Lynn, has been said of a multitude of other places both by word and by letter. Many have wondered that in places so far apart the same things should have been said and done, and that by the same processes, so peculiar to Methodism, and so unlike every thing else, the same results should be secured; and yet it is no cause of wonder. This system is *one* machine, propelled and guided by one force; one set of rules of action, overriding all individual wills of the agents, governs all proceedings. Wesley was preëminently a cunning man. His rules of conduct for himself and his preachers were framed with great skill, and with a mind that had profited much by observation of rules of action adopted by the Jesuits. These rules, written and traditionary, became the rules of action for every itinerant preacher. The modes of assault and

defence used by some of the striplings in obscure corners sometimes astonish observers by their shrewdness. But the wonder comes of forgetting that it is Wesley, and not the stripling, that has that shrewdness. So it is in fact not many minds, but one mind that rules in all places of the dominion of Methodism, and hence there is no cause of wonder that the modes of operation and the results should in all places be so much alike.

See how carefully the Book of Discipline reduces all minds to the control of one; even in little things. In the section on the duty of travelling preachers, it says:—"and remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, *great and small*, in the Methodist discipline." "Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner we direct, in preaching and visiting from house to house, in reading, meditation and prayer; above all, if you labor with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory."

This, it will be seen, puts the whole ministry under the central power, and makes each a part of the one great machine, as so many men manœu-

ving on a grand puppet parade. Of course the operations and results in all places must be the same. Each travelling preacher acts not himself, but his master, and wherever a travelling preacher is, there the most worshipful grand master Methodist is, and there his judgment and will are put in force, and the rules of his order guide every act.

Another hint from our correspondence touches the secrecy with which, on occasion, the proselyting efforts are covered. The reader must have had his indignation raised, in reading in the letter about Thetford, the account of the secret arts employed in relation to that book deposited with the young ladies. Any one, moderately conversant with Methodist proselyting operations, must have come to the knowledge of many instances of the same kind. Now did that minister depart from the usual habit of his order in that act? Did he act according to his own will, or "as a son in the gospel," in making the gift of that book under such strict injunctions of secrecy, and in making it to so many persons at once under these injunctions, and in coming to the place provided with copies enough of the book to supply scores of people at once? Was that a chance act, or a part of the habitual action under the command, "to

mind every point, great and small"? Is it not here evidence, that among the things "great and small" enjoined by the superior, who answers to the "WE" in the discipline, is the duty of using just this art to detach the mind of the child from the parent? Indeed, we must ignore all that we know of the unity of Methodist operations, and all the facts of similar nature, coming out here and there, in order to believe that he did not act according to an established and universal rule of action for the Methodist ministry.

Let it then be borne in mind, by all who have sons and daughters liable to come within the range of these seductions, that as soon as the first impressions favorable to Methodism shall be made upon them, they are to come in contact with seducers, who will, if it shall serve their turn, employ this art upon them, and teach them that their salvation requires them to conceal from their parents the steps which they are about to take, and all the instruments that are employed for their seduction. This is a matter that deserves to be better known by parents who so freely allow their children to attend Methodist meetings. They perhaps would shudder at the thought of allowing them in attendance at Universalist meetings. But Universalists have no such perfected system

of bringing their seductions to bear. Their net is spread more in the sight of the bird, and therefore with less danger. The danger that a child will be seduced from the way of life by attendance on Methodist meetings, is much greater than by attendance on Universalist meetings, both because the danger is less apparent, and because the arts of seduction are deeper and more efficient.

It is by these means that proselytes are sometimes made from families the most intelligent, and even in the higher positions in society. The daughter of such a family, being of quick intelligence and ardent mind, is induced, for the gratification of curiosity, to spend an evening in a Methodist meeting. Coming within the sympathies of the scene, new to her, her feelings are aroused, and, after the sermon, when the runners go abroad through the meeting to persuade individuals to come forward to be prayed for, an appeal is made to her. She is told that her position is one of special danger, living, as they say she does, among the rich and the proud, and that her only way to escape the danger is to cast in her lot among the poor Methodists. She then reverts to the wishes of her parents. This is met by a misapplication of those words of Christ—"He that

loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me." The consciousness of the duty of sacrificing worldly views and expectations to Christ, is roused, but misdirected, in that the proposals of Methodist leaders are put in the place of Christ's grand proposals of grace. And so the delusion takes effect. The poor child is carried captive, and made to believe that the sacrifice which Christ requires of her, is the sacrifice of her duty to her parents — is the violation of filial obligations — and the sacrifice of her social position, in order to a compliance with those who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, and make the word of God of none effect by their tradition. Before the parents dream that it is possible for these people to make any impression on *their child*, the die is cast. She has become a member of the class, and has been in secret and in all possible ways pledged to a course contrary to the known wishes of her parents. They at length make the discovery of what has been done, and interpose with parental authority. Pointing to that command, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for it is right," they insist that the child shall follow their course of religious instruction, and not its opposites; and, when it is too late, they command her to "cease to follow the in-

struction that causeth to err from the way of knowledge." Her place in the Methodist meeting and class is vacant for a while ; but her mind and purpose are there. Next, the Methodists secure private interviews with her, and she is counselled to rebel against parental authority, and risk the consequences of that rebellion ; and told that this is the cross which she is to take up ; and if she refuses she must perish forever. Now the point is gained ; a misdirected conscience is more powerful than all other considerations ; the character for life and for eternity is fixed, in that triumph of delusion. Thereafter, all the efforts of the parents to reclaim their child, only set her the more strongly against them. This is not the case of one individual, but of many ; and those many instances should make it with Christian parents a fixed principle, never to allow their children to amuse themselves by attending Methodist meetings. The motive which usually induces such attendance is not without sin ; and the evils which come of it are often a chastisement of the parents for allowing such sin in their children. I have known of Christian parents who would not allow their children to attend such meetings, *because of their tendency to destroy all reverence for God and eternity* in the mind of the child ; and if what

we have shown in the preceding pages be real, this is a very important reason. But its importance is not exceeded by that which comes from the secret snares which are set in such meetings. Be that as it may, Christian parents should be better informed than they have been, of what snares are laid for the feet of their children, and how eager Methodism is to detach their children from the parental rule, and from the God of their fathers, and how ready to inculcate disobedience to parents.

The letter which gives us the result of Methodism in Kittery, Maine, is full of instruction. Many perhaps think it is hardly amiable and Christian in us, when Methodists come in with a purpose of sweeping all before them, to make any resistance to them. As they claim to have a more pure and heavenly religion, it is thought they ought not to be opposed, but allowed to go on and do what they will. Now Providence has so ordered it, that we have one affecting specimen of just this course of action, and that extended on to its results. And perhaps it will appear, that the destruction of one of our best parishes was not too great a sacrifice for the good to be secured from this evil. Here Methodism came in where Puritanism had borne its clusters of sub-

stantial fruits. The pulpit had, perhaps, come into the possession of a Congregational minister, whose doctrines did not differ essentially from those of the Methodists ; so he thought there was no propriety in withstanding them ; or perhaps he thought, as many others have, that efforts to resist error are unwise and unchristian, aside from the charity and below the dignity of the pulpit. But his example proved this, that Methodism is not always killed by kindness, and not resisted by yielding to its demands. He encouraged his people to believe that the religion which he taught was not essentially better than that taught by Methodism, and they practised according to his instructions, as any people under such instructions naturally would. His congregation was weakened, and in his dying advice, instead of rousing them to make a stand for the truth, he advised them to become Methodists, which also they did.

Here was a rich opportunity for Methodism to work out its own results. Congregationalism, so to speak, had made over to it one of its well prepared fields, that it might do its best upon it. It had for that place taken away all obstructions and oppositions, given it its own people, and said, " Go work in my vineyard, plant it with what seed

you will, cultivate it in your own way for one generation, and see what will be its fruits and its aspects then." The experiment is now complete, and the result is one thick mass of briers and thorns covering the once fruitful field. I know of no other instance where the desolating work of Methodism is so complete as it is here, but of many where the same tendencies are as manifest, in proportion to the freedom from hindrances. Generally speaking, it is needful to the life of Methodism itself, as well as to the preservation of the gospel, that there shall be a Calvinistic church on the ground to withstand its desolating tendencies. Let it have every thing in its own way — let it teach what it will, and practise what it will, with none to gainsay it, and it will with difficulty perpetuate its own existence for a generation. Let the reader here call up the examples within the range of his own observation. There is in Lynn one of the Methodist churches, the one at Wood End, that has been situated at a great distance from any Calvinistic church. It has had around it for a half a century a large population. It has not till very recently had a Calvinistic church within two miles of it, nor any other society near it. It has had around it a population of thousands not attached to other

denominations, and yet with all these advantages, and with here and there a flush of revivals, it has with difficulty sustained itself; and now it has fifty-nine members less than it had ten years ago. In the mean time, those Methodist churches in Lynn which have stood in nearer contact with Calvinism, have prospered more. The inference is obvious.

This correspondence clearly shows that I did not exaggerate the proportion of backsliders in putting them at nine-tenths. I then had no guide but my own observation. I somewhat hesitated to put forth the conclusion forced upon me by the results of that, lest readers who had not seen the thing as I had should think me rash and untrustworthy as a witness. Yet I knew of no way for a truthful witness than to state the truth as it lay before his own eyes. But the statement has now been confirmed by many witnesses; and what is of more consequence, the figures of the Methodist statistics place it beyond a doubt.

The conclusion drawn from the statistics may perhaps be set in a clearer light than it has been by our previous statement. In 1843 the membership of the body in round numbers was 750,000. In 1854 it was, if we include proba-

tioners, 780,000 ; that is a gain of 30,000. Methodist statistics do not report deaths. Ours do ; and those of the last year reported a little more than one and a half per cent. of the whole. Two per cent. a year will then be a fair allowance for deaths. That, for eleven years, will be 145,000. Add the 30,000 gain, and 175,000 as that part of the additions that have not fallen away. The number added by the previous computation we made to be 1,800,000. One-tenth of this sum is 180,000. So that those that have not fallen off are 5000 less than one-tenth of the whole.

Persons of our denomination judge of the character and influence of Methodism very differently, according to the different relations in which they stand to it. Those who have never come into conflict with it, and who have not been in close observation upon its spirit and results, can be very charitable towards it. For aught they know, it is a very pious, earnest, and sincere development. They may perhaps blame the zeal of those who, by a sad experience, have been brought to a better knowledge of the thing. And yet those whom Providence has put in positions where they have been compelled to know it well, are entitled to be heard. Nor is it charity, but ignorance,

that condemns them for want of charity. It is a fact worthy of consideration, that those who have had extensive observation and experience in the matter, very much agree in their opinions.

I shall be much disappointed if the thoughts which have been stirred in the public mind, touching the facility of Methodism in multiplying spurious converts, should not lead on to inquiries as to the sources of so much of our home heathenism. The great matter of lamentation in religious circles is that so large a portion of the people in Christian lands are so wholly aloof from Christian institutions. In some views, it is a wonder from whence comes such a multitude of practical despisers of Christianity; and for all purposes, it is important that we should know the sources of such a fearful accumulation of heathenism in Christian lands. It is a great fact, that while we are making so much effort to begin the work of evangelizing upon the great heathen masses abroad, we are from some sources having a heathen element increased upon us faster than all our agencies abroad can diminish it there. Sooner or later the question must be taken up in earnest, and we must look in the face the causes that are producing among us these heathen millions. It were folly to pretend to have found one cause

that has produced the whole evil. There is a combination of malign elements here at work. But see what we have demonstrated in relation to one of them. We have shown that the most natural and common result of those spurious conversions, so multiplied among the Methodists, is the conclusion taken up after the cheat is discovered — that all religion is a cheat. We have shown that in many places persons in fearful numbers have drawn to themselves that conclusion from those premises. We have further shown that the M. E. Church North is now adding to the number of its probationers — all but a very small fraction of whom time proves to have been but spuriously converted — about 200,000 a year; and that in eleven years it has gathered in and sent out nearly 2,000,000 of these persons. It has sent them out, for the most part, hardened and alienated from Christianity and all its appliances. In short, it has sent out these to swell the number of home heathen. All of these do not confine their residences to communities where Methodism operates. Persons of this character are more likely to belong to what is called the floating population. Hence they are distributed about in all our communities. So the blight resulting from Methodist influence is felt in localities where there is no Methodism.

Now, the fact that in every five or six years, Methodism adds another million to the spurious converts, and a good portion of that million to the despisers of Christianity, will reveal one important source of this accumulation of irreligion around us; and sooner or later we must look to it.

CONCLUSION.

Some may shrink from the conclusion to which the facts and reasoning of this book would conduct them, in the thought that a system that produces so many good results, and holds in connection with it so many good men, cannot be a bad system. It has been no purpose of mine to maintain a denial that Methodism has done any good, or that many of the Methodists are the real regenerate children of God. I cheerfully grant all that any fair and discriminating witness would testify on that score. And having done that, my ground is broad enough to sustain the conclusion that the system as a system is bad — that its results contain more of evil than good — that its ministrations are more of death than of life — that it is one of the great hindrances to the purity and progress of religion, which must be taken out of the way.

There was a time when the church of Rome was a true church of Christ, and then a time when she had ceased to be such. But after she had ceased to be such, she yet did much good and more evil. She had among her ministers and people some good men and more that were not such. And then there was the same reason for claiming her as a true church, as there is for putting Methodism among the churches now. The Romish church in the dark ages was a stupendous mass of moral corruption, yet much might be said of the good which she even then accomplished for the world. Yet she was then no less Antichrist than now. Sooner or later the Christian world will bring its discrimination to bear upon this more recent form of corrupting Christianity, and judge it according to its main purpose and results.

The fact that Methodism originated at a time and in connection with the instruments of a great revival of religion, is no warrant for its present character. The Romish church originated in the revivals of the apostolic age. Its origin was one and the same with that of Christianity itself, yet it degenerated to what it now is. By reason of human depravity, there is a tendency to decline and corruption following all revivals; and God,

in his inscrutable wisdom, sees fit not to hinder errors and seeds of corruption from mingling with the principles and practices of those whom he honors as the instruments of great reforms, which seeds in after ages produce great disasters. So it was in the Lutheran Reformation. Perhaps among uninspired men, the world has produced no reformer more to be admired than Martin Luther; yet his work was not perfect. There were errors encouraged by him, which have opened the way for the almost total loss of Christianity in the churches in Germany bearing the name of Luther. By reason of his errors Germany has next to no Sabbath, and having no Sabbath she can have no Christianity. As by the errors of Luther, Lutheranism has well nigh lost its life, so by the errors of Wesley, Wesleyanism in America has fallen off from being a church of Christ.





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